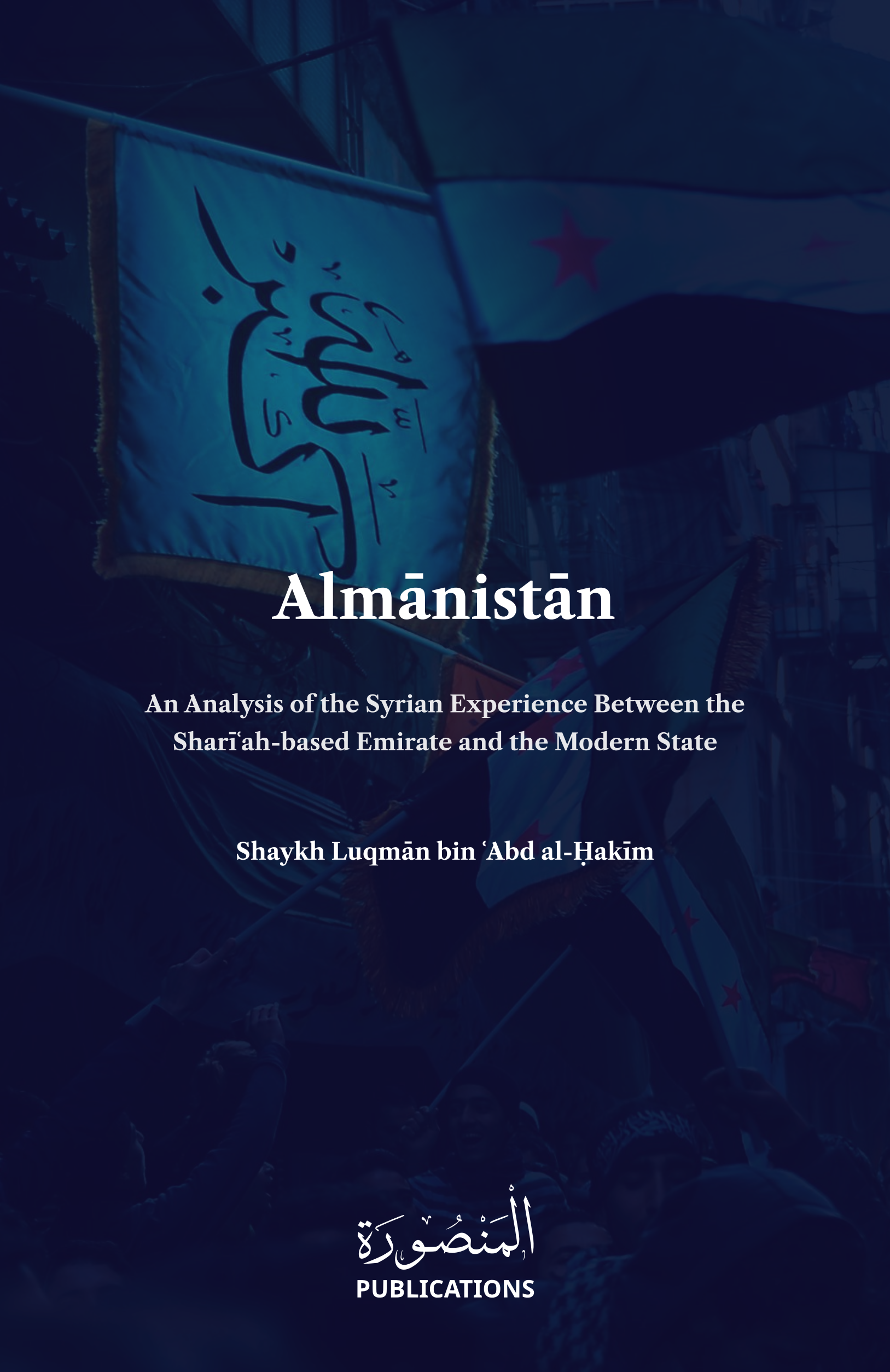




Almānistān

An Analysis of the Syrian Experience Between the
Sharī'ah-based Emirate and the Modern State

Shaykh Luqmān bin 'Abd al-Ḥakīm

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PUBLICATIONS

**‘Almānistān: An Analysis of the Syrian Experience Between the
Sharī‘ah-based Emirate and the Modern State**

Shaykh Luqmān bin ‘Abd al-Ḥakīm

‘al-Nāzi‘āt

Translated by:

al-Manṣūrah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Bismillāhi r-Raḥmāni r-Raḥīm

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ، وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ، كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ، وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ،
وَبَارِكْ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ، وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ، كَمَا بَارَكْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ، وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، فِي الْعَالَمِينَ إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ
مَجِيدٌ

Allāhumma ṣalli ‘alā Muḥammadin wa ‘alā āli Muḥammadin, kamā ṣallayta ‘alā
Ibrāhīma wa ‘alā āli Ibrāhīma, innaka ḥamīdun majīd. Allāhumma bārik ‘alā
Muḥammadin wa ‘alā āli Muḥammadin, kamā bārakta ‘alā Ibrāhīma wa ‘alā āli
Ibrāhīma, innaka ḥamīdun majīd

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لَوْجِهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكُورًا

“For Allaah’s Countenance only. We wish for no reward, nor thanks from you.”

[Al-Insān 76:9]

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Introduction

In the name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

There has not been a single transformative Islamic movement in our time that has proclaimed the slogan of Islam and raised the banner of *Jihād* against the reality of *Jāhiliyyah* and subservience to the system of the *ṭāghūt*, except that it was destined to be fought at its inception, slandered along its path, and tested at the very first thresholds of empowerment.

The *Jihādī* movements have been at the forefront of the global scene since the turn of this century. It has become clear to every person of sound mind that they are the real actors in this part of the world, and that the upcoming changes in the political and national landscape (for better or worse) will be a result of their actions on the ground. Therefore, they have been the most exposed to this multifaceted targeting:

- **Politically:** By turning the *mujāhid* groups against one another and drawing them into marginal wars that prevent them from focusing on the core conflict.
- **Militarily:** By assembling global and local alliances to strike the *mujāhidīn* and their families, without any regard for international laws or human rights legislation.
- **Through media:** With smear campaigns against the people of truth, at times removing them from the scene, and at other times inflating the image of certain deviants and exaggerating their actions.
- **In terms of Shari‘ah:** This is the most dangerous war, which relies on the Pentagon’s jurists and the Marines’ religious scholars, regardless of their attire, from the thawb to the tarboosh.

Allāh the Exalted said:

“How can there be a covenant for the polytheists with Allah and with His Messenger, except those with whom you made a treaty at al-Masjid al-Harām? So as long as they are upright toward you, be upright toward them. Indeed Allah loves the righteous. How (can there be a covenant) – if they prevail over you they would not observe toward you any bond or covenant; they please you with their mouths but their hearts refuse, and most of them are defiantly disobedient. They have exchanged the signs of Allah for a small price and turned (people) away from His path. Truly, evil is what they used to do. They do not observe toward a believer any bond or covenant – and it is they who are the transgressors.” (Sūrat al-Tawbah 7-10)

Ibn Kathīr said: *“Allah the Exalted here urges the believers to show enmity toward the polytheists and to dissociate from them. For it is not fitting for them (the polytheists) to have any covenant with Allah after their polytheism and disbelief in Allah and His Messenger ﷺ. Nor would it be fitting for them even if they were to appear outwardly as Muslims, because they have not kept their word, nor refrained, nor abided by their treaties – they have no covenant and no protection.”*¹

Shaykh Abū Muṣ‘ab al-Sūrī said: "The ruling regimes have proven that in their war against the *jihādīs*, they do not hesitate to take any action that contradicts the most basic principles of morality, honor, or any principles and religions whatsoever. They are prepared to kill their own people and liquidate their own countrymen by opening fire on demonstrators, carrying out massacres against civilians, or waging open wars in which the armies of these governments have bombed entire cities and buried the living under the rubble. The Algerian regime went the furthest in this regard; it killed people en masse using the vilest methods for a clear strategic

¹ *Tafsīr al-Qur‘ān al-‘Aẓīm* 7/153

security objective, which was to attribute these atrocities to the *mujāhidīn* and pull the rug of popular support from under their feet."²

They [*Jihādī* movements] alone (among all other movements) are the ones who have shaken the balances of power, undermined the aura of the dominant and subservient regimes, and stormed the edifices of tyranny that were fortified behind international legitimacy and the maps of Sykes-Picot. They moved the conflict from hotel rooms to the battlefields, and from the language of appeasement to the jurisprudence of disassociation. It is from here that the international *tāghūt* was mobilized, not merely to fight this small group with weapons alone, but to dismantle their project from its roots, shatter its methodological structure, and frame its statements and actions within the distorted narrative of terrorism.

The war against the *mujāhidīn* has become a multi-front war: the spear is no longer alone on the battlefield; rather, the pen has been employed, the media has been mobilized, and official thought and the shaykhs of the institutions have been rallied. Strategic studies are now written with ink dipped in the fear of the Caliphate's return, not with academic ink based on the philosophy of theoretical neutrality. The war on the *mujāhidīn* today is not fought only in the mountains and deserts, but in universities, research centers, and the pages of international law. This is not new in history; every transformative, revolutionary movement that transgresses the limits imposed upon it is accused (in its early stages) of collaboration and heresy. But if victory is decreed for it and it seizes power, people rush to declare their obedience and prepare ceremonies of allegiance. Then, it is entered into the register of sacred things, and the hypocrites ride the wave of "reform from within." Such is the nature of the conflict between authority and revolution: you are not acknowledged "outwardly" unless you overcome them, nor "inwardly" unless you betray the foundational principles!

² A summary of my testimony on the jihad in Algeria (p. 72)

The Dilemma Between Politics and Relapse

As we face a complex scene of transformations that people are perplexed to name—are they methodological coups or rhetorical maneuvers?—we need precise and fair tools of analysis to judge them. Tools that differentiate between a change in means and a collapse of objectives, and between an evolution of discourse and a reversal of starting points. For not everyone who changes their tone has changed their religion, and not every adaptation that appears beneficial is permissible to undertake, unless it is weighed on the scale of a firm objective and a sound frame of reference.

Here, essential principles emerge: that experiences should be judged not by aspirations or slogans, but by the foundational references from which they began, and that objectives should be read through the language of the jurists and legal theorists, not with the tools of orientalists and enlightenment thinkers.

This is because the transition from a stage of weakness to a stage of empowerment is not a magical leap, but a heavy march on the path of conflict. Perhaps Muslims have never in their history reached such a point of weakness as they have in our current era, nor has the might of their adversaries, both militarily and intellectually, grown as it has today. However, this reality, no matter how intense its darkness, does not justify confusing the issues, nor does it permit redefining the project. For perseverance in steadfastness (not adaptation at the expense of foundational principles) is the only path to unifying the ranks and reaching the goal. The great scholar al-Ṭūfī said: "The religion of Allāh and His laws are the dearest, most honorable, most magnificent, most exalted, and most majestic of things. Therefore, establishing them with honor, force, and dominance is more fitting and appropriate than establishing them with humiliation, meekness, and enduring injustice and disgrace. When Muḥammad ﷺ had but one disciple, his uncle Ḥamzah ibn ‘Abd

al-Muṭṭalib, he protected him from the tyrants of the Arabs and struck Abū Jahl with his bow, splitting his head, and Abū Jahl was the master of the people of the valley."

The road to victory is long, but concessions do not shorten it; rather, they divert it until the traveler thinks he has reached the pinnacle of faith while he is in the depths of polytheism. Steadfastness (though it may seem costly at first) is what leads to achievement, not justifying defeat with the language of realism.

And it is not progress to change the faces of the rulers while keeping the structure of governance as it is. For replacing a nationalist *ṭāghūt* with an Islamic *ṭāghūt* does not negate the reality of tyranny; it merely reproduces it in a more familiar dialect and under a more deceptive banner. As Allah the Exalted said "*Are your disbelievers better than those [former ones], or have you immunity in the scriptures?*" (Sūrat al-Qamar 43)

Many "revolutionary" projects end up replicating the very state against which they rebelled, but with new symbols, a different national anthem, and a vocabulary inspired by the revolution's doctrines. However, the ultimate frame of reference has not changed, the constitution has not been built upon revelation, and authority still derives its legitimacy from the opinions of the people rather than the rule of the Lawgiver, and from international accords rather than the foundational principles of *Tawḥīd*.

The issue, therefore, is not whether a state is *jihādī*, factional, or revolutionary; rather, it is that its methodology must be divinely ordained, its allegiance clear, and its governance subservient to the rule of Allāh, not to international legitimacy. True liberation is not measured by the flag that is raised, but by the *Sharīʿah* that is implemented; nor is it measured by the changing of faces, but by the complete uprooting of the *Jāhili* frames of reference.

What we fear today is that the "Islamic identity" will become a superficial veneer for a modern, nation-state project that tailors Islam to the measures of the state, rather than shaping the state according to the *Sharī'ah* of Islam. We fear that we will see *Jihād* transformed into a pillar of national authority, the *da'wah* devolved into public relations rhetoric, and the *Sharī'ah* emptied of its sovereignty, only to be reduced to a code of general public morals. Should this come to pass, we will not have saved the Ummah; rather, we will have merely adorned for it a new *tāghūt* in familiar garb.

Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah said: "No *fitnah* ever occurs except from the abandonment of what Allāh has commanded, for He, the Glorified, commanded both the truth and patience. Thus, *fitnah* arises either from abandoning the truth or from abandoning patience." ³

So, how much more grave is the case of one who abandons the truth (the implementation of *Sharī'ah*) as a result of losing patience in the face of enmity from kufr and its adherents?

If arms have decided the battles on the ground, the battle for leadership after "liberation" is no less critical. The question that is bitterly posed today is: Why do the sincere mujāhidīn, who liberated the land, shy away from taking charge of its affairs? Why do those who offered their blood hesitate to offer their vision? Are they not the most deserving of people to take the reins of power, having borne the greatest burden in achieving victory? Or has the complex of "civilian legitimacy" become heavier for some of them than the blood of the martyrs?

The danger lies not only in the hesitation of the sincere, but also in the infiltration of those who cloak themselves in the guise of the Islamic project, possessing neither genuine affiliation with it nor sincerity in its objectives. They enter the ranks for tactical purposes, hide behind grand slogans, and then move from within with a

³ Al-istiqāmah [p 39]

spirit of compromise, not a spirit of creed. These individuals may not have raised arms against the Jamā‘ah, but they are more dangerous than the manifest enemy, for they demolish from within in the name of openness, and they hollow out the project of its meaning in the name of realism.

The Demise of the State of Kufr

Here, it is necessary to clarify a common delusion found in some contemporary jihādī discourses, which is the belief that the fall of a kāfir state necessarily entails the establishment of an Islamic state. This is a delusion and a flaw in strategic thinking, for the removal of tyranny alone does not produce the banner of Tawḥīd. Just as divine decree may bring down a state of kufr, it may also replace it with another state of kufr, one that is similar or even worse. This is because Islam can only be established through the actions of the believing community, through conscious effort, and through a legitimate, organized structure. Allah the Exalted says: *“Fight them; Allāh will punish them by your hands and will disgrace them and give you victory over them and satisfy the breasts [i.e., desires] of a believing people”* (Sūrat al-Tawbah 14)

Imām al-Qurṭubī said: "His statement, the Exalted: {Fight them} is a command, and {Allāh will punish them} is its response, which is in the jussive mood, signifying recompense. The implied meaning is: If you fight them, Allāh will punish them by your hands, humiliate them, grant you victory over them, and heal the hearts of a believing people." ⁴

Al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr said: "And this is general for all believers." ⁵

For this reason, the creed that "the state of kufr will inevitably fall" must not become an opiate for the consciousness of the advocates of Jihād, but rather a catalyst for

⁴ al-Jāmi‘ li-Aḥkām al-Qur’ān (8/86)

⁵ Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Aẓīm (7/156)

action. The fall of kufr will not occur unless what is written is fulfilled by our own hands, as Allāh has promised, not by waiting for an appointed time in which we remain idle. From this, we understand that the blood of the martyrs is not merely an adornment for history, but a political and Shar‘ī trust upon the necks of those who come after them. If we are sincere, we must continue on the path, not just with a spirit of emotion, but with a more precise fiqh and an integrated political project that restores the authority of the dīn and establishes a life for the Ummah that resembles the Khilāfah, not one that produces a modern state in Shar‘ī clothing.

What distinguishes the mujāhidīn from others is that their understanding of divine decree does not seat them among the ranks of spectators; rather, it drives them to act until they achieve their ultimate goals. While many sit behind their desks weeping over lost lands and counting the causes of ruin, you find the mujāhidīn shaping events and striving to fulfill the divine patterns (*sunan*), for they know that the congruence between divine decree and the Sharī‘ah is what gives action its value and victory its meaning.

The Necessity of a Methodology (Manhaj)

The methodology (*manhaj*), in any movement of change, is not a slogan to be raised or a banner to be hung. It is the creedal and behavioral structure that gives a project its features and sets its compass. It is the map that forms in your mind when you hear the name of a group or the affiliation of an individual. If you say "Ikhwānī," you understand his position on the fiqh of gradualism and the priorities of public interest (*maṣlahah*). If you say "Jihādī," you prepare yourself to hear the discourse of disassociation (*mufāṣalah*) and the approach of confrontation. The *manhaj* is the profound identity, not the superficial label. It is the difference between a group that possesses a Shar‘ī objective and a standard of judgment, and one that moves according to its interests and changes with its whims.

What is alarming, however, is that some movements (chief among them the subject of our study) continue to exist in a gray area: at times raising Sharīʿī slogans, and at other times adopting the philosophies of the modern state. They court their veteran soldiers with the dīn, while addressing the secularists and the worldly-minded with the language of imagined interests that clash with the fundamentals of the Sharīʿah. Thus, they are neither a purely daʿwah movement, nor a declared state, nor a jihādī group with a disciplined frame of reference.

Among the detrimental ideas that have been proposed, especially in the jihādī arena, is the methodology of "no methodology" (*al-lāmanhaj*). These are the youth who thought they had reached an unprecedented genius in the field of movement theorization, so they raised the slogan of war against *manhaj*. The situation with them eventually led either to a retraction from this farce or to pure heresy. Shaykh Abū Baṣīr al-Ṭarṭūsī said: "We continued to mindlessly oppose 'the *manhaj*' and 'methodology-ism' until our youth were left without a *manhaj*, without immunity, and without a clearly defined path! Emptying the youth of sound creed and a correct *manhaj* makes them easy prey for any intellectual invasion." ⁶

What further complicates the scene amidst this methodological fog is the proliferation of writers and theorists, and the ignition of a war of pens—not to clarify the truth or establish proof, but often to justify changes and embellish deviations, in a language dominated by rationalization and lacking in affirmation. Everyone who picks up a pen and writes a post imagines that he has reached the rank of a mujtahid qualified to give opinions, becoming competent to issue fatwās on major contemporary issues (*nawāzil*) and to speak on the divine patterns of empowerment and the rulings of statehood. Although the intellectual arena today is crowded with loud voices and rapid writing, its impact on true awareness is minimal because much of it is not built upon knowledge or *manhaj*, but on momentary

⁶ The official telegram channel of Shaykh Abū Baṣīr al-Ṭarṭūsī, dated 22 March 2025

responses to interests or organizational affiliations. Thus, the *manhaj* was lost between official ambiguity and media justification, and projects that once confronted regimes in the name of the dīn began to reformulate themselves in the language of the state, justifying their transformations with the logic of adaptation, even if the price was the collapse of their frame of reference.

There is no dispute that a sincere word is a piercing arrow, and that many of the youth have written on their platforms what the shaykhs of satellite channels have not said, and with their steadfastness, they have filled gaps that committees and councils could not close. But sincerity does not excuse one from having a *manhaj*, devotion does not substitute for discipline, and enthusiasm alone does not produce a project; rather, it can create confusion if not properly directed. The problem is not the abundance of writing, but the weakness of the scale of judgment. When an opinion transforms into a fatwā, an analysis into legislation, and a personal experience into a frame of reference, we are faced with a discourse open to chaos, not guided by knowledge or governed by a clear objective.

This is nothing new. The people of knowledge have established that "prohibiting [the unqualified from speaking] for the rectification of matters of dīn is more vital than prohibiting [the incompetent from managing] for the rectification of matters of wealth." The pseudo-scholar, the opportunist, and the infiltrator must cease from adorning themselves with the station of the people of Sharī'ah, even if they utter correct statements, as long as they utter them out of place. We are not diminishing the impact of the word, but rather warning against the self-inflation of its speaker. Whoever thinks that a post or an article is sufficient to become a "theorist" or "qualified to speak in the name of the project" has rushed to a station he has not earned and contributed to confusing the compass.

Let it be known that writing in the arenas of Jihād is not an emotional reward but a methodological responsibility. That ink spilled without knowledge corrupts more

than it rectifies, even if written with a sincere intention. Therefore, it is obligatory upon anyone who writes—if they seek to benefit, not just to make noise—to restrain their tongue with a scale of judgment and to present their words to those who excel in clarification, not to those who offer abundant applause. The stage is delicate; it cannot bear trembling pens, nor inflated heads, nor inverted fatwās presented in the name of ijtihād. Shaykh ‘Aṭīyyatullāh al-Lībī said: "Participation in writing on the forum is not limited in its forms. Commenting with a good word, in various styles—sometimes serious, sometimes humorous, sometimes in a scholarly manner, and sometimes emotionally. At times with supplication, support, thanks, and praise, and at other times expressing disagreement, refutation, and objection, and other types of beneficial dialogue. And [sharing] beneficial quotes, reminders, admonitions, and drawing attention to all that is beneficial and righteous. In short, a Muslim brother is not incapable of saying something good... If he finds nothing to say, then let him be silent, and let him fear Allāh in all his affairs."⁷

Among the great established principles of the Sharī‘ah is that a ruler who replaces the Sharī‘ah of Allāh with man-made law, and turns away from the rule of the Qur’ān willingly and by choice, has by his action nullified the foundation of the dīn and exited from the community of Muslims. For this reason, the consensus in the primary references of Jihād—both old and new—has been established upon two pillars. First: declaring as a kāfir anyone who rules by other than what Allāh has revealed, when he casts the Sharī‘ah behind his back and commits to a legal system that fundamentally contradicts it. Second: the obligation to rise against this category of rulers in Jihād in the cause of Allāh, not for mere oppression or corruption, but for apostasy (*riddah*). These pillars are not individual ijtihāds, but rather foundational principles that generations of mujāhidīn have received, one after another, tested in the course of confrontation, and then documented in their creedal and political

⁷ As’ilah wa-Ajwibah Nāfi‘ah li-Kuttāb al-Muntadayāt (2/1184)

discourse as non-negotiable determinants when discussing the legitimacy of fighting and its rulings.

Allāh, the Exalted, said: *{Have you not seen those who claim to have believed in what was revealed to you, [O Muḥammad], and what was revealed before you? They wish to refer legislation to ṭāghūt, while they were commanded to reject it; and Shayṭān wishes to lead them far astray. And when it is said to them, "Come to what Allāh has revealed and to the Messenger," you see the hypocrites turning away from you in aversion. So how [will it be] when disaster strikes them because of what their hands have put forth and then they come to you swearing by Allāh, "We intended nothing but good and accommodation." Those are the ones of whom Allāh knows what is in their hearts, so turn away from them but admonish them and speak to them a far-reaching word. And We did not send any messenger except to be obeyed by permission of Allāh. And if, when they wronged themselves, they had come to you, [O Muḥammad], and asked forgiveness of Allāh and the Messenger had asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allāh Accepting of repentance and Merciful. But no, by your Lord, they will not [truly] believe until they make you, [O Muḥammad], judge concerning that over which they dispute among themselves and then find within themselves no discomfort from what you have judged and submit in [full, willing] submission}* [Sūrah al-Nisā': 60-65].

And He said: *{Those who believe fight in the cause of Allāh, and those who disbelieve fight in the cause of ṭāghūt. So fight against the allies of Shayṭān. Indeed, the plot of Shayṭān has ever been weak}* [Sūrah al-Nisā': 76].

Imām al-Bukhārī narrated on the authority of Abū Mūsá, who said: A man came to the Prophet ﷺ and said: "A man may fight for spoils, another may fight to be remembered, and another may fight to show off his position. Which of them is in the cause of Allāh?" He replied: *"Whoever fights so that the Word of Allāh is the highest, he is in the cause of Allāh."*⁸

⁸ al-Bukhārī (3126)

Subject of Study

It is upon these meanings that this book has been written, as a reading of the new Syrian situation—the one represented by the leadership that has ascended to power after the overthrow of the regime. The importance of this reading stems from the fact that the Syrian experience is not local in its impact, but rather has extensions throughout the lands of the Muslims in general. Everything that happens in al-Shām reverberates in the Maghrib and the Mashriq, in fiqh and politics, in activism and da‘wah, in perception and in the overall project.

Hence, in this study, we attempt to present, not to prosecute; to deconstruct, not to demolish; and to analyze the experience as it stands between the illusions of a Shar‘ī emirate and the shocks of the modern state. This is done not with the eye of a wary opponent, nor with the eye of an enthusiastic supporter, but with the eye of an observer who knows that ruling the land is not the end of the road, but its grand beginning. It should be taken into consideration that the author is not a machine without a creed and a methodology (*manhaj*), nor an inanimate object devoid of biases and feelings. Rather, his choices and disagreements will become apparent in the coming chapters, and this is from the nature of human beings.

We will strive to set aside personal and methodological differences with both the supporters and the enemies of the project, for judging the project requires stripping oneself down to the truth while purifying the soul from the effects of desires (*hawā*). Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah said: "Debate and argumentation are of no benefit except with justice and fairness."⁹

Often, in the heart of a dā‘ī, the water of truth mixes with the foam of desire, and he imagines that he is defending the limits of Allāh when, in reality, he is only defending the edges of his wounded self. When he is wronged, he rises up and becomes angry,

⁹ "al-Intiṣār li-Ahl al-Athar" (p. 159)

not because the dīn has been violated, but because his own self has been insulted. His zeal for the Sharī‘ah intensifies as the impact of the transgression against him grows stronger. Herein lies the subtle fitnah: when a person is drawn into a battle of personal vengeance while believing it to be for the victory of Allāh. It is the moment when the cause transforms from championing the truth to exploiting the truth, and from zealousness for the dīn to zealousness for the self. This hidden conflation is what produces the most dangerous forms of deviation: "deviation in the name of anger for Allāh's sake, and intensity in dispute in the name of loyalty to the truth."

Allāh, the Exalted, says: *{Say, "Whether you conceal what is in your breasts or reveal it, Allāh knows it. And He knows that which is in the heavens and that which is on the earth. And Allāh is over all things competent."}* [Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān: 29].

As we strived for fairness, so too was our endeavor to disregard the bickering of the project's supporters and adversaries. Everyone expects the writer (whoever they may be) to present what is in their minds in a manner that they are incapable of formulating, and their role is to be a mouthpiece for their inclinations. If we did that, we would be, in the sight of Allāh, among the traitors, even if we were hailed as eloquent in their circles.

The greatest honor for a creation in our time does not compare to a portion of the honor of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. He was rejected by his people, and his chest was constricted by what they said. So the verses were revealed to console his heart and to provide a methodology for the callers after him. Allāh, the Exalted, said: *{We know that you, [O Muḥammad], are grieved by what they say. And indeed, they do not call you a liar, but it is the verses of Allāh that the wrongdoers reject. And certainly were messengers denied before you, but they were patient over [the denial] and harm they suffered until Our aid came to them. And none can alter the words of Allāh. And there has already come to you some information about the messengers. And if their aversion is difficult for you, then if you are able to seek a tunnel into the earth or a*

stairway into the sky to bring them a sign, [then do so]. But if Allāh had willed, He would have united them upon guidance. So never be of the ignorant. Only those who hear will respond. But the dead - Allāh will resurrect them; then to Him they will be returned. And they say, "Why has a sign not been sent down to him from his Lord?" Say, "Indeed, Allāh is able to send down a sign, but most of them do not know."} [Sūrah al-An‘ām: 33-37]. For this reason, I advise (before the reader opens his mouth in judgment or his heart in contemplation) that he reflect on whether his heart has been afflicted with blindness. For if the heart is blind, proofs will not benefit it, nor will texts guide it. Rather, the text of revelation itself becomes a tool to support his desires (*hawā*), not a source of guidance for his soul. And the Qur’ān, despite being a cure, does not open its treasures to one who comes to it to strengthen himself against his opponent, but only to one who comes to strengthen his heart against his own self. How many a reader of a book has seen nothing in it but a mirror of himself, and how many an interpreter has read nothing but what conforms to his own inclinations!

When desire (*hawā*) precedes contemplation, understanding becomes corrupted, the heart deviates, and the objective is lost. And what is the saying of the Truth: *{So when they deviated, Allāh caused their hearts to deviate}* [Sūrah al-Şaff: 5], except a testament that deviation does not begin from the text, nor from its reader, but from his objective. Whoever's heart trembles with resentment when he reads a dissenting view, letter by letter, let him first examine his heart before his mind, and his intention before his understanding. For guidance is a provision (*rizq*), and deviation is a just outcome.

Let it be known that not everyone who has strayed from the truth on a particular issue is an enemy of it, nor does everyone who misinterprets a deviation possess a malicious intent. Souls, even when sincere, may stray, and even when truthful, may deviate—not because falsehood has become guidance, but because desire (*hawā*),

when it cloaks itself in the garb of *ijtihād*, blinds and deafens, and drives its possessor to fight for falsehood while thinking he is repelling it. Herein lies the tragedy: to see some of the misinterpreters, who are known for their sincerity and trustworthiness, make mistakes that break the heart—not out of malice, but out of confusion and difficulty in reconciling between the text and the perceived interest (*maṣlahah*), or between reality and obligation.

For this reason, Ahl al-Sunnah were not a people of haste and rashness. It was established with them that an error in creed—even if it necessitates kufr—does not warrant takfīr until the conditions are met and the impediments are removed, and stubborn rejection is proven without ambiguity or doubt. Rushing to apply rulings, even if they fall into the categories of kufr and shirk, was not the practice of the scholars. So do not be among those who see their opponent's *shubhah* (doubt/misconception) as weak and thus assume the dissenter is being arrogant and obstinate. And do not be among those who see their own proof as strong and thus assume that everyone who disagrees with it is a denier or a manipulator. For perhaps your proof is clear, but your opponent's eye is burdened by what you do not see, or his soul is overwhelmed by a prior interpretation, or his hearing is drowned in the echo of the frames of reference upon which he was raised. The truth is not known merely by its clarity, but by the impartiality of the one who receives it. This is what prevented the scholars from definitively declaring the people of innovation (*ahl al-bid'ah*) to be kuffār, despite the ugliness of some of their statements, because they understood that the path from error to kufr is long, not to be shortened by enthusiasm, nor traversed with anger.

Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah said: "Based on this, the one who misinterprets and errs in his interpretation, whether in matters of creed or in matters of commands, even if his statement contains an innovation that contradicts a text or an early consensus, and he is unaware that he is contradicting it but has simply erred in

it—just as a muftī or a judge errs in many issues of fatwā and judgment through his ijtihād—he will also be rewarded for his ijtihād that aligns with obedience to Allāh, though not rewarded for his error, even if it is pardoned. Then, he may commit a negligence in what is obligatory or follow a desire, which would be a sin on his part, and it may become a major sin. And the proof with which Allāh sent His Messenger may be established against him, and he may stubbornly oppose it, defying the Messenger after guidance has become clear to him, following a path other than that of the believers, in which case he would be an apostate-hypocrite, or an apostate in an outward manner. So, speaking about individuals necessitates this detailed approach. As for speaking about types of statements and actions, both inward and outward, such as beliefs, intentions, and so on, the obligation concerning what is disputed therein is that it be referred back to Allāh and the Messenger. Whatever conforms to the Book and the Sunnah is truth, and whatever contradicts it is falsehood. And whatever conforms in one aspect but not another contains both truth and falsehood. This is that. The point here is that people of knowledge and faith are in agreement on this principle, as evidenced by their affirmation of what they affirm, their rejection of what they reject, their praise for what they praise, and their condemnation of what they condemn. For this reason, you find imāms of knowledge and dīn, from those affiliated with fiqh and zuhd, condemning innovations that contradict the Book and the Sunnah in beliefs and actions, from the people of kalām, ra'y (opinion), zuhd, and taṣawwuf, and their likes, even if among them are those who are mujtahids who have a reward for their ijtihād and whose error is forgiven. It has been authentically narrated from the Prophet ﷺ through more than one chain that he said: *'The best of generations is the generation in which I was sent, then those who follow them, then those who follow them.'*¹⁰ The first generation was upon a state of perfection in knowledge and faith that the second generation did not reach, and likewise the third. The emergence of innovations and hypocrisy was in accordance

¹⁰ The ḥadīth — with a slight difference in wording — in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (no. 1963) and elsewhere.

with the distance from the Sunnah and faith. The more severe the innovation, the later its appearance, and the lighter it was, the closer it was to emerging. For this reason, the innovation of the Khawārij and the Shī'ah appeared first, then the innovation of the Qadariyyah and the Murji'ah, and the last to appear was the innovation of the Jahmiyyah, to the point that Ibn al-Mubārak, Yūsuf ibn Asbāt, and a group of scholars from the companions of Aḥmad and others said: 'The Jahmiyyah are not from the seventy-two sects; rather, they are heretics (*zanādiqah*).'¹ This is despite the fact that many of their innovations were adopted by people who were not heretics, but rather accepted the words of the heretics out of ignorance and error." Allāh, the Exalted, said: *{Had they gone forth among you, they would not have increased you except in confusion, and they would have hurried among you, seeking [to cause] fitnah among you. And among you are those who would listen to them}* [Sūrah al-Tawbah: 47]. He thus informed that among the believers are those who are responsive to the hypocrites. So, what occurs among some of the people of īmān in response to some of the affairs of the hypocrites is from this category.

The point here is to know that there has never ceased to be in the Ummah of Muḥammad ﷺ those who enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, and that his Ummah will not unite upon misguidance. Rather, if a reprehensible matter (*munkar*) occurs, whether it be from the conflation of truth with falsehood or otherwise, Allāh will surely raise up one who will distinguish it. This must be clarified, and people must be given their due rights, as 'Ā'ishah said: "*The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ commanded us to place people in their proper stations.*" Narrated by Abū Dāwūd and others.

Ḥujjat al-Islām [al-Ghazālī] said: "You should not think that takfīr and its negation must be known with certainty in every situation. Rather, takfīr is a Shar'ī ruling that pertains to the permissibility of seizing wealth, shedding blood, and the judgment of eternal damnation in the Fire. Its basis is like the basis of all other Shar'ī rulings.

Sometimes it is known with certainty, sometimes with a high degree of probability, and sometimes there is hesitation regarding it. Whenever there is hesitation, withholding from takfīr is the better course. Rushing to takfīr is a trait that is dominant in the character of those who are overcome by ignorance. It is necessary to draw attention to another principle, which is that the dissenter may contradict a mutawātir text and claim that it is subject to interpretation. However, if his interpretation has absolutely no basis in the language, neither near nor far, then that is kufr, and its proponent is a denier, even if he claims to be an interpreter." ¹¹

Structure of the Book

This book consists of an introduction, six chapters, and a conclusion. The introduction serves as a preamble to the intellectual battle we are waging and a necessary prelude to the major issues we will present in the remaining chapters. In it, we have presented a set of fundamental concepts and essential ideas that are indispensable for understanding the course of action, identifying the sources of error, and foreseeing the outcomes with clear insight.

- **Chapter One, "Empty Slogans,"** is dedicated to exposing the cognitive framework upon which the supporters of al-Jolānī's project operate. This includes their method of grounding their arguments in rationalization and shaping a mentality of adulation, which expresses a compound deviation in their mental structure that cannot be attributed to ignorance alone. Rather, it is the sanctification of a functional role and the legitimization of nationalistic loyalty. In this chapter, we have avoided mentioning their names or quoting them verbatim, for the sake of brevity and due to the limited value of their words in the scale of knowledge and research, as they are in a position of promotion, not establishment, and of being used, not exercising *ijtihād*.

¹¹ Fayṣal al-Tafrīqah (p. 87)

- **Chapter Two, "Engineering the Flocks of Birds,"** explains the method of gradualism in altering revolutionary and jihādī concepts, and how the collective consciousness of the soldiers and the common people was reshaped using subtle techniques not devoid of cunning, until the jihādī project became a tool for guarding the maps of nation-states, instead of being a voice for the truth in the face of the *ṭawāghīt* of the age.
- In **Chapter Three, "The Ideologization of Creeds,"** we have shown how the Sunni creedal discourse was transformed into a functionalist discourse, directed against local adversaries with a political classification rather than a Sharʿī description. Thus, the creed became a stick with which to beat anyone who deviated from the amīr's decision, even if he was upon Tawḥīd, the Sunnah, and the correct banner, while silence is maintained regarding the attacking enemy if he aligns with the official banner.
- **Chapter Four, "Methodological Colors,"** is a presentation of the most important issues from which the contemporary Syrian leadership, represented by al-Jolānī and his entourage, has deviated, in terms of the principles of derivation of rulings, methods of reasoning, and the distortion of major concepts such as empowerment (*tamkīn*), public interest (*maṣlaḥah*), and outcomes (*maʿāl*). It documents the intellectual transformations that did not occur suddenly but proceeded with a quiet gradualism until they settled in the embrace of the modern system.
- In **Chapter Five, "The Trinity of Tyrant-Making,"** we expose the mechanisms adopted by al-Jolānī in creating a jihādī version of functional tyranny, under the names of "General Security" and "the rule of institutions," supported by a Sharʿī discourse that reproduces despotism with the verses of consultation (*shūrā*) and the hadiths of hearing and obeying.

- **Chapter Six, "The Hijacking of Objectives,"** provides a statement on the principles of refuting interpretations that rely on necessity, public interest, and the objectives of the Sharī'ah, without a regulating standard or a restricting text, but rather in a way that suits the desired political outcome to be imposed, not the Sharī' outcome that pleases Allāh and His Messenger.
- As for the **Conclusion**, it contains a summary of the journey, what we hope to be the essence of the matter, and an affirmation that the way out of this state of being lost will not be found through the maps of intelligence agencies or a state of coercion, but through the guidance of the Prophethood, the objectives of the Message, and the principles of the *manhaj*.

Chapter One: Empty Slogans

In a stage of major transformations, when standards are shaken and priorities are reformulated, new discourses emerge that lean more on leading personalities than on creedal methodologies or Sharī' principles. When one of these figures steps forward with confident strides to the forefront of the scene, voices race not to question or correct him, but to affirm the correctness of his vision and repeat his phrases, as if wisdom comes only from his direction and as if he is the "inspired, spoken-to one" in whose hands alone lies our salvation.

In this arena, a striking social and intellectual phenomenon has arisen: the reinterpretation and religious and Sharī' adaptation of reality in a way that confers legitimacy upon certain positions and their proponents. Principles are no longer the foundation; rather, they have been rearranged to serve specific realities and defined paths. Through our study of a number of prominent promoters of this trend, we have observed a common mental and behavioral pattern among all of them, despite their

different styles and backgrounds. Some work on the political theoretical formulation to justify the transformations, some dress it in a Shar‘ī guise that relies on the fiqh of necessity and the expansion of public interests, while others suffice with populist, enthusiastic promotion, considering that standing behind the leadership is part of a "collective allegiance" that tolerates no dissent.

What unites all of these individuals is not just their support for a particular political choice, but their adoption of a single method for reading, interpreting, and promoting reality. It is a method that makes the official vision the only natural path, criticism a gateway to chaos, and reservation a form of betrayal.

If we wish to deconstruct this discourse, which has become a modern intellectual methodology, we will find ourselves before five major pillars that represent the columns of this trend. We will analyze them in this chapter from a critical perspective that traces the intellectual origins and methodological starting points upon which this vision was built.

The Phenomenon of Idolizing Leaders

This transformation is one of the most prominent features of the new discourse: the shift from the centrality of the Islamic project, with its creedal and fiqh aspects, to the centrality of the person carrying the project, who has become, in the eyes of his supporters, the possessor of an exceptional vision, a brilliant leadership genius, and a unique legitimacy that no one can rival.

Talk of the *manhaj*, the banner, and the foundational principles has receded in favor of intense discussion about vision, sagacity, and the path forward, to the point where terms like "sovereign decisions" and "phased necessities" have become the new Shar‘ī facade for any transformation or concession. All of this has been marketed as an irreversible fate, an indisputable path, and a realism that cannot be questioned.

The matter did not stop at admiration for the leader's intelligence and flexibility, but went beyond it to implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) describe him as a gift from Allāh to the Jihād, and the focus of divine providence at this stage. How many times have we heard phrases repeated on the accounts of the supporters of the Hay'ah's project: "If there were a man in the arena who could manage the battle, it would be so-and-so," "No concession was made without the Shar'ī outcome being assessed with impartiality and responsibility," "These are decisions that can only be understood from the lofty perspective of the leadership and its foresight into the outcomes of matters," "Obedience today is not obedience to a person, but obedience to a vision that represents salvation from chaos."

Thus, all concessions, transformations, and alliances were brought within the circle of "necessities" that the leader alone assesses, and the base is required to follow him in them, not because they are convinced, but because they do not see with the same insight he possesses. Even the old terms that were used as signposts on the path, such as *ṭawāghīt*, *ḥākimiyyah*, and *al-walā' wa-l-barā'*, are no longer mentioned except in conjunction with the fiqh of the current stage, the fiqh of the state, and the balancing of internal and external factors.

If we want to understand the roots of the deviation in the discourse that applauds the leader, we must contemplate the pattern of thinking that governs this discourse, which can be summarized in the hidden conflict between the "political mentality" and the "rhetorical mentality."

The political mentality, as it was understood in the heritage of the rightly-guided jihādī groups, does not imprison the project in the person of the leader, but makes the leader a servant of the project. It elevates the authority of the Shar'ī'ah over the decision, regulates *ijtihād* with the scale of the text, and judges reality not by "personal estimation," but in accordance with the rules of Shar'ī reasoning and the principles of sound politics. It is a mentality that knows the difference between

obedience and blind submission, between *ijtihād* and betrayal, and between the fiqh of public interest and sliding behind the veil of ambition.

As for the rhetorical mentality, it is the complete opposite. It is a mentality in which symbols dominate principles, and the center of consciousness shifts from the *manhaj* to the leader, until the entire project is reduced to his person, the texts are read through his eyes, and reality is understood from the tone of his voice. It is a mentality that knows nothing of obedience except its submissive form, nothing of politics except what is reinforced by internal media, and nothing of public interest except what has been affixed with the seal of the leadership. It suspends all its positions on foresight, the fiqh of the stage, and complex calculations, and criminalizes any criticism, no matter how scholarly, because it "opens the door," "reopens wounds," or "confuses the ranks." It cloaks this sanctification in a reassuring silence, then justifies it with the fiqh of necessity, so that when the major terms fall and the Sharʿī boundaries dissolve, it is said: "This is the wisdom of the leader!" And if asked for the proof, the questioner is referred to the corridors of secrets and the trust of the leaders. This mentality accepts only one voice, hears only praises of loyalty, and classifies people only as either loyalists or saboteurs. It assassinates meanings under the slogan of public interest and retains from the Sharīʿah only husks with which it adorns itself while emptying it of its authority. And if it is said to them, "But this contradicts what we used to be upon!" they reply, "We are in a new stage, which has its own fiqh and its own men!"

What is striking is that these same supporters of the project are the ones who incite against other Islamic groups and methodologies, claiming that they have fallen prey to the "rhetorical mentality," presenting themselves as the "knights of political maturity" and realistic sagacity. In reality, however, their discourse is the perfect model of this rhetorical mentality: they justify every concession as a Sharʿī necessity, suspend every turning point of change on the genius of the leader and his foresight,

and make alignment with him a certificate of salvation, and criticism of him a declaration of rebellion.

The danger of a speaker who cloaks himself in the attire of the people of truth is not limited to what he decrees, but extends to his effect on the common people and those engaged in the dīn. For as soon as he justifies an error, he becomes a role model in deviation, and as soon as he is silent about a reprehensible matter (*munkar*), his silence is taken as legislation. When one whose name is great but whose fiqh is little takes the lead, he becomes a fitnah for the weak and a pretext for the ignorant. That is why Imām al-Ājurī warned of the effect of the people of the Qurʾān when their outward conduct is corrupt: "Whoever has these characteristics becomes a fitnah for everyone who is tempted. For when he engages in behavior that is unbecoming of someone like him, the ignorant will emulate him. And when the ignorant person is criticized, he will say: 'So-and-so, the carrier of the Book of Allāh, did this, so we are more entitled to do it.' Whoever is in this state has exposed himself to something grave, the proof has been established against him, and he has no excuse unless he repents." ¹²

This is not the place for a comprehensive study of the differences between the political mentality and the rhetorical mentality, but rather an attempt to clarify some of the traits that the supporters of the "project" frequently criticize in others, while these traits are firmly entrenched in themselves. As for the detailed methodological foundation for this distinction, it has another place and a separate study, by Allāh's permission.

The Sanctification of Maps

For the supporters of the project, the Ummah is no longer the community of believers united by the Qurʾān, Jihād, and the implementation of the Sharīʿah.

¹² al-Jāmiʿ li-Kutub al-Imām Abī Bakr al-Ājurī; Akhlāq Ḥamalat al-Qurʾān (1/81)

Instead, the Ummah has become the liberated land, the administered region, and the existing administrative structure. Geography has become the essence of the Sharī'ah, administrative presence the measure of success, and the headquarters more sacred than the principle.

They do not speak much about Tawḥīd, except when they wish to adorn their discourse or declare enmity towards a specific party. They do not display Jihād except when the history of the Hay'ah is mentioned to build a justification for concessions upon its foundations. As for today, the value lies in what is achieved on the ground in terms of material stability, as if the state has come to mean establishing a civil registry office, not establishing the dīn, and regulating the market, not regulating the limits of Allāh.

Under the slogan of the current stage, necessity, and Shar'ī politics, the rulings of the Sharī'ah are reprogrammed to serve the material entity. Tawḥīd can be postponed, Jihād can be frozen, and the implementation of the Sharī'ah is reviewed, diluted, and "rationalized"... and all of this is marketed as being from the fiqh of empowerment (*tamkīn*), while in reality, it is the fiqh of consolidating the entity more than consolidating the dīn.

We have observed (by tracking the discourse of a number of the project's promoters) that this deviation in priorities is not incidental, but is deeply rooted in the mental structure of the project's theorists and supporters. Every concession is justified in the name of necessity, every postponement is cloaked with the pretext of reality, and every interest is weighed not on the scale of the Sharī'ah, but on the scale of what serves the existing entity, which is, in its essence, a modern nation-state with an Islamic veneer (a veneer that is almost being lost on the part of the leadership), and nothing more.

Their defense of the borders of the state has become greater than their defense of the limits of Allāh, and their anguish over the image of the project is greater than their pain for the loss of its principles. So much so that if a Sharīʿ issue is raised with them, the answer is ready: "We are not in the luxury of applying rulings; we are in a time of building!" And if they are asked about the concessions, they reply: "This is from the cunning of the leadership and its vision for this stage."

This haste in consolidating the entity and bending the rulings for the sake of the land is the other side of laxity in the dīn, and laxity, when it enters the Sharīʿ discourse, corrupts it. They see no harm in postponing the creed as long as the "project" is expanding, and they see no danger in suspending the Sharīʿah as long as the "map" is being secured. But the one who journeys to Allāh is not saved by such things, nor is he content to be deceived by the glitter of reality without clarity of the path. Imām al-Shāṭibī, exposing this pitfall, said: "Whoever seeks the salvation of his soul must be firm until the path becomes clear to him. And whoever is lax, the hands of desire (*hawā*) will throw him into perils from which there is no escape for him, except as Allāh wills."¹³ And so, the map has become the creed, and "to be with us on the ground" has become more important than "to be with Allāh upon clear insight."

The Stage of Selective Jihād

Whoever reads the discourses of the project's supporters comes away with a strange impression: as if we have destroyed the palaces of the tyrants, purified the lands of the Muslims from foreign influence, and have nothing left before us but "terrorism." It is the imminent danger, the greatest enemy, and the final renegade. The great battle of Tawḥīd has been reduced, not to the tyranny of the Americans, nor to the occupation of the Jews, nor to the international espionage networks, but to a feud with a renegade group that they have turned into a litmus test for political loyalty

¹³ al-Iʿtiṣām (2/125)

and a ladder for ascending the ranks of rationalization and alignment. And perhaps the blood of the Khawārij shed on their swords as a means of drawing closer to the nations of the *ṭāghūt* will replace the blood of the mujāhidīn who are callers to Tawḥīd and the Sunnah. In short, Tawḥīd is no longer an issue of clashing with the *ṭawāghūt*, nor a call to liberation from the Jāhilī systems, but has been transformed into a soft partisan tool used in internal conflict and to justify animosity towards anyone who opposes the official vision.

Shar‘ī diplomacy (*mudārāh*) never means turning the enemy into a partner, nor turning a creedal position into a diplomatic discourse. Rather, it means bearing the pressure of the stage without compromising the foundational principles of the religion. Therefore, dissolving the concepts of disassociation from kufr in discourses of societal openness, and stripping the group of its enmity towards Jāhilī institutions under the banner of moderation, is nothing but a subtle slaughter of the creed, not a regenerative *ijtihād* in politics. The believers were not commanded to be at peace with falsehood, but to conceal it [in times of weakness], and they were not sent as callers without adversaries, but as witnesses over mankind.

What is being formulated in Syria in the name of realism is the dismantling of the jihādī identity from within, to the point where the sincere one is accused of extremism, the silent one is accepted, and the fluid one is beloved. The internal ranks are re-engineered to the measures of the authority, not to the scales of loyalty to Allāh and disassociation from His enemies. And it is strange that the terminology of Tawḥīd has remained in the media discourse (at least the supplementary one), but its significance has changed:

- *Al-Walā’ wa-l-Barā’* no longer pertains to disbelieving in the *ṭāghūt*, but to belonging to the "liberated geography" or its ruling system.

- The *ṭāghūt* is no longer Ibn Salmān or Ibn Zāyid, but whoever thinks of rebelling against the leadership for its suspension of the Sharī‘ah of Allāh.
- And the Saved Sect is no longer the group of Tawḥīd and Jihād, but the "deterrent" faction that has mastered the discourse of the current stage and the art of applause.

This conflation of concepts, and the transformation of the enemy from an explicit *ṭāghūt* to a sincere adviser, only arises when the religious discourse is led by men who are lost between the fiqh of public interest and the fiqh of rationalization. The people are deceived by them, and it is thought that their veneration is a proof and their large numbers a sign. But the true scholar is not deceived by slogans, nor is he intimidated by artificial veneration, as Imām Ibn al-Jawzī said: "As for the firmly-grounded scholar, he is not intimidated by the statement of a venerated person, let alone by the action of an ignorant, delirious one."¹⁴

We are now facing a diluted version of Tawḥīd, a tamed version that does not disturb the international powers, nor anger those with vested interests. A functional Tawḥīd that does not mobilize the masses to overthrow the *ṭawāghūt*, but is used to tranquilize and pacify them in the name of necessity and the fiqh of reality.

We have noticed, by tracking the discourse of this project's promoters, that the genuine creedal tone has almost disappeared, to be replaced by a soft language filled with "wisdom," "balancing," and "the fiqh of outcomes," but only in one direction. When the discussion is about Jewish infiltration or the Druze factions, it is said: "We need time," "The circumstances are not favorable," and "We are preserving the blood of the Muslims." But when the discussion is about those (from among the mujāhidīn) who have opposed the leadership or criticized some of its policies, the tone is inverted: "Khawārij," "hypocrites," "agents," "they want to split the ranks."

¹⁴ "Talbīs Iblīs" (p. 190)

For the first time in decades of jihādī work, we are seeing a version of the fiqh of empowerment that has been declawed¹⁵: it does not attack the occupier, but negotiates with him; it does not expose the *tāghūt*, but asks him for calm; it does not confront the American project, but makes a truce with it and turns a blind eye to its arms. But this "fiqh" becomes resolute when it concerns the mujāhidīn who oppose the project. Here, the "*manhaj*" awakens, the fatwās are summoned, the proofs regarding the Khawārij and the corruptors are extracted, and principles are established against them that were not established against a tyrannical regime or a brutal occupier. The irony is that those who market this discourse raise the banner of "rationality" and "political maturity," and criticize others for their "rigidity" and "combative Salafism," while they themselves have redefined Tawḥīd to be a servant of the political decision, not a ruler over it.

What exposes the falsehood of these patchers-up are two things that are almost inseparable: base mockery and flimsy excuses. When they have no response to criticism, they resort to sarcasm; they ridicule those who are serious and brandish vulgar expressions in the face of anyone who carries the concern for the *manhaj*. When faced with a call to implement the Sharī‘ah or resist the occupier, they present a package of canned excuses: "The time is not right," "The circumstances are pressing," "Priorities have changed," "We need to build," "This is not our battle right now." The reality of these excuses is that they are veils for hypocrisy, not gateways to understanding. Shaykh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Ṭarfī said: "Hypocrisy is most often revealed by two things. Indeed, they are but excuses by which Allāh exposes hypocrisy, and Allāh most often exposes the inner reality of the hypocrites by two matters: The first

¹⁵ If they claim that empowerment is still far from reach (as some of their more pious supporters repeat), then they have thereby undermined the very core of their discourse which boasts of ‘achievement’ and presents ‘managing the territory’ as if it were a divine conquest. If they are not empowered, how can they raise the banner of the project and demand obedience to it? And if they are empowered, in what way do they differ from others who preceded them to power? Mursī ruled for months, Erdoğan for years, and before them the ‘State’ group appointed judges, imposed rulings, and enforced the hudūd. What merit remains to be claimed? What special distinction justifies changing the methodology? If the criterion is administering land, others reached that before them; and if it is establishing the religion, then the texts and the reality stand before them.

is mockery, as in the statement of Allāh the Exalted: *{And if you ask them, they will surely say, "We were only conversing and playing." Say, "Is it Allāh and His verses and His Messenger that you were mocking?"}* [al-Tawbah: 64-65]. The second is the excuses they present to evade the truth, due to their weakness in the face of the argument. The weaker the argument against the truth, the more arrogance and hypocrisy it conceals behind it, because souls do not yearn for opposition without a reason, so they present flimsy arguments and weak excuses, while inwardly they are obstinate."¹⁶ Thus, the traits of two groups have combined in these people: the mockery of the supporters of the "Islamic State" group and the excuses of the Islamo-democratic parties. They mock advice just as the former do, and they adorn their obstruction with excuses just as the latter do. The result, however, is one and the same: the disarming of the creed and the transformation of Islam from a cry in the face of falsehood into a veil to cover the negotiating table.

When one contemplates this selective methodology, one does not see an erroneous *ijtihād* or a less-preferred *fiqh*, but rather a feverish race towards desires, in which the texts are used as a bridge, interests as a mount, and Tawḥīd as a formal slogan to pass off political loyalty. In such a situation, the value of literature infused with wisdom becomes manifest, as Ibn al-Muqaffa' said: "When a rational man is confused between two matters and does not know which is correct, he should look at which of them is more aligned with his desires and be wary of it."¹⁷ A look into the politics of the project's leaders requires no lengthy contemplation to see that they are competing to describe the ultimate desire, then wrestling over who will reach it first!

While Tawḥīd in the literature of Jihād meant uprooting the Jāhilī system from its foundations, Tawḥīd in their discourse today means remaining within the system with a Shar'ī veneer that is more acceptable and less bothersome. From here, it

¹⁶ al-Tafsīr wa-al-Bayān" (vol. 2, p. 684)

¹⁷ "al-Adab al-Ṣaghīr" (p. 33)

becomes clear to the observer that this "Jūlānī methodology" is a pragmatic approach closer to the methodologies of the Bāṭiniyyah, who empty the terms of the Sharīʿah of their substance and then replace them with their own desires. Here, they initially relied on "Tawḥīd, Jihād, and Sharīʿah," then these were emptied out and given Qarmathian interpretations. Ḥujjat al-Islām [al-Ghazālī] says: "For if they strip the apparent meanings from the articles of faith, they can rule by the claim of an inner meaning according to what necessitates casting off the rules of the dīn. If trust in the implications of explicit words is lost, then the Sharīʿah will have no foundation to which one can refer or upon which one can rely."¹⁸

The Jūlānī Methodology

When you read the writings of the promoters of this project, you find yourself before an epic of unparalleled genius: a seasoned leader, a comprehensive vision, an unmatched brilliance, and a history being rewritten in a new color. In their discourse, al-Jūlānī is not the amīr of a faction or the leader of a group, but the intersection point of history, the talent of the era, and the decree of Allāh on earth.

Astonishing phrases are repeated in their speeches: "The only one who understood the reality," "The man who moved the revolution from chaos to statehood," "The mujāhid who mastered war as he mastered governance." Some have even gone so far as to portray him as a savior around whom hearts unite, through whom victory is achieved, and by whom breasts are healed. Shaykh al-Islām said: "A group of extremists among them began to believe in the infallibility of their shaykhs in their hearts, or they would say, 'He is divinely protected,' and the meaning is the same. Even if one were to affirm it with his tongue, he would treat him with infallibility in his heart."¹⁹ And he said: "Many people have an extremism concerning their shaykhs

¹⁸ "Faḍāʾih al-Bāṭiniyyah" (p. 12)

¹⁹ "al-Mustadrak ʿalā Majmūʿ al-Fatāwā" (vol. 1, p. 206)

of the same kind that the Shī‘ah have in their extremism for their Imāms.”²⁰ He also said: "These people want the truth to be said about their imāms, but they speak falsehood about Allāh. They are content for Allāh to be cursed and insulted, but they are not content for the one they follow to be cursed for what he has fabricated against Allāh and His Messenger. Rather, they are not even content for the truth to be said about him or for a grievous error he has committed to be attributed to him.”²¹

This discourse does not present a project with its substance; rather, it presents a man with his attributes, as if the idea does not derive its value from its content but from its bearer. When you observe the details, you see how decisions are framed in the name of "the leadership's vision," concessions are justified as being from "the leadership's cunning," and regression is overlooked in the name of "the leadership's fiqh." Even silence about the occupiers is made out to be a form of political sagacity that the common Jihādīs do not understand. It is an "exaltation of genius" instead of the exaltation of the Sharī‘ah, a glorification of the entity instead of the glorification of the dīn, and a sanctification of the outputs of the leadership's mind more than the objectives of the Book and the Sunnah.

If we look at the essence of the project itself, we will find it to be a repeated version, with nothing new or surprising. It re-presents the model that the Ummah has experienced in previous Islamo-democratic experiments:

- In the Tunisian "Ennahda" experience, the Sharī‘ah was excluded from political discourse in favor of civil consensus marketed as "realism."
- In the Sudanese experience, slogans became synonymous with authority until the Islamic project became a tool in the hands of the regime, not a monitor over it.

²⁰ "Minhāj al-Sunnah" (vol. 6, p. 430)

²¹ "Jāmi‘ al-Masā’il" (vol. 4, p. 37)

- And in Erdoğan's Turkey, Islam was reduced to an electoral voice within a secular system.

The only difference is that the "Jūlānī" model this time came under the cloak of Jihād and the banner of Tawḥīd, which makes the deception deeper, the confusion greater, and the collapse upon impact more painful. So, what is the substance of the project after stripping away the embellishments of glorification? It is a model of a functional, modern state that goes along with the regional equation, appeases international players, and seeks to normalize its political existence by shedding everything that is embarrassing before the West or bothers its neighbors. It is a project of legitimacy without Sharī'ah, a state without a creed, an administration without an imāmah, and governance without resorting to the judgment of Allāh's law. Their slogan is: no Khilāfah, but "institutions"; no community of believers, but "citizens"; no implementation of the Sharī'ah, but a "guided judiciary"; no might for the mujāhidīn, but an "executive force"; and no enemy except one who deviates from the central decision. Thus, the project ultimately becomes identical to the conclusion of all Islamo-democracies:

- Islam is present, but for ornamentation, not for hegemony.
- The dīn is mentioned, but not followed.
- The Sharī'ah is respected, but postponed or annulled.
- And Tawḥīd is raised in statements, but absent in the balance sheets.

And if anyone objects to this direction, he is told: "Where is the alternative?", "Isn't this a temporary phase?", and "Do you want the sacrifices to be wasted?" It is as if Islam can only be implemented after a full administrative cycle, an emergency Shūrā council meeting, or the approval of the regional sponsor.

The irony is that this system is marketed as the straight path to true empowerment, whereas it is nothing but the empowerment of a functional apparatus that reproduces the modern state with a light Islamic tint—one that does not threaten the international order, does not disturb its neighbors, even if they are warring Christians and Jews, and does not open the door to the sovereignty of the Sharī'ah... as long as the leader masters the game.

"Jūlānism" is not a new project; it is a repetition of the Islamo-democratic project, with one difference: this time, it was dressed in the garb of Jihād, so that the project could pass through the gate of sacrifices, and so that the blood of the martyrs could be exploited to build a silent, obedient state that resembles all other states, except that it sometimes speaks in the name of Islam.

Voluntary Stupefaction: From the Mind of the Revolution to the Herd of the State

When we return to analyzing the project's supporters, we find that what unites them most is not a political stance, nor are they details of *fiqh*, but rather a deep-seated belief that the leader knows what we do not know, sees what we do not see, and understands what we do not understand. Our only duty is to follow him, bless his decisions, think well of all his transformations, and blame our own minds if they doubt or question.

This state, which we figuratively call "trust," is in reality the transfer of the center of thinking from the individual to the leadership. The individual is not required to see, but to have things seen for him; not to judge matters, but to be content with what he is told. Thus, consciousness is removed without coercion, and thought is emptied without suppression. The result: people who appear free but live in a tight intellectual leash, which shapes their positions, their enemies, the truth, and falsehood into a single mold, subject to updates whenever the leadership wishes.

Allāh, the Glorified, says on the tongue of the followers of the polytheists: *{And they will say, "Our Lord, indeed we obeyed our masters and our great men, and they led us astray from the [right] way.}* [Sūrah al-Aḥzāb: 67]²². Imām al-Qurṭubī said: "The more apparent meaning is that it is general, referring to leaders and chiefs in polytheism and misguidance, meaning, 'we obeyed them in disobeying You and in what they called us to.'"²³

In this state, loyalty is no longer fundamentally derived from understanding or conviction but transforms into a daily ritual of ceremonial obedience. The supporters read statements as if they were verses, memorize the leader's speeches as they memorize prophetic traditions, and repeat his decisions as one repeats *dhikr*, even if they were, just yesterday, a rejection of foundational principles.

We have seen them change their positions overnight, not because the truth changed, but because the leadership changed its direction. If Turkey was an enemy yesterday, today it has become a wise neighbor. If the governments were filth, they have become regional partners. If the Syrian revolution was a cause of the Ummah, it has become a national interest. With all this, the question of contradiction is not raised; rather, it is assumed that whoever asks is the one suffering from a narrow horizon or a delay in comprehending the plan.

This type of discourse does not differ fundamentally from what we saw in the ranks of the "Islamic State" organization, even if its cover is more refined and its methods less bloody. "Dā'ish" killed in the name of the pledge of allegiance (*bay'ah*), while

²²Al-ʿAllāmah Ibn al-Qayyim, Iʿlām al-Mūwaqqiʿīn (vol. 3, p. 19): "And the scholars have used these verses as evidence for the invalidity of taqlīd (blind following), and while it does not prevent them from being considered disbelievers, those who are engaged in it are not to be debated with; because the analogy has not occurred on the part of one who is a disbeliever, and the faith of the other has not been established without proof for the muqallid (the one who blindly follows), just as if a man were to blindly follow another man, he would have sinned, and another would have been reprimanded in a matter, so he made a mistake in its aspect, and both of them would be blameworthy for blindly following without proof; because all of that is imitation of some by others, even if the sin in it differed."

²³Al-Jāmiʿ li-Aḥkām al-Qurʾān (vol. 8, p. 86)

these people accuse of treason in the name of public interest (*maṣlahah*)—and note that accusations of treason are followed by imprisonment or liquidation. "Dā'ish" made an example of the critic because he was an "apostate or a Khārijī," while these people slander the critic because he is a "disruptor or an agent." But the essence is the same: the annulment of the mind in favor of the leader, and the classification of people based on their proximity not to the truth, but to "the vision."

Because the project has become linked to the leader's name, not its content, any criticism of him is considered treason, any question is understood as rebellion, and even any reminder of the Sharī'ah is read as incitement. The *ḥalāl* and the *ḥarām* are no longer our reference point, but rather what is possible, suitable, and available. And if the definition of "possible" changes, the truth changes along with it. This is the core of the transformation: the shift from the mind of the revolution to the herd of the state; from resisting tyranny to taming the mujāhid; from championing principles to serving the institution.

Chapter Two: Engineering the Flocks of Birds

Calls [to a cause] do not collapse on their own; rather, they are reshaped piece by piece until they become strange and unrecognizable, their founding principles unknown, and the branches they worked upon forgotten. This is not achieved by force alone, but requires precise engineering: a discourse that changes concepts without causing a shock, familiar faces that adopt the new tone, and a programmed environment that sees silence not as a concession but as wisdom, and obedience not as surrender but as *fiqh*. This is where the quiet deviation begins. Not with the overturning of a banner or the splitting of an organization, but when "loyalty" is redefined to become loyalty to geography, not to the creed; when the "*manhaj*" is

reduced to the person of the leader; and when consciousness is rebuilt around the sanctification of "the achievement" rather than the correction of the deviation.

At this moment, questioning the project is no longer permissible but is viewed with suspicion. People are not weighed by the knowledge or Jihād they carry, but by the extent to which they applaud the current phase. Imām Ibn Qutaybah spoke the truth when he said: "People are like flocks of birds, one following the other. If someone were to appear before them claiming prophethood—despite their knowledge that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ is the seal of the prophets—or someone claiming divinity, he would find followers and supporters for it."²⁴

True engineering is not accomplished by coercing bodies, but by subduing souls. Allāh, the Exalted, said: *{Satan promises them and arouses desire in them. But Satan does not promise them except delusion.}* [Sūrah al-Nisā': 120]. The great scholar Ibn al-Qayyim said: "The base, worthless soul takes pleasure in false hopes and deceitful promises, rejoicing in them as women and children do, and is moved by them. False words are the source of Satan's promises and his incitement of desires, for he makes their adherents wish for victory over the truth and its attainment, and promises them they will reach it through a path other than its own. Thus, every proponent of falsehood has a share in His statement: *{Satan promises them and arouses desire in them. But Satan does not promise them except delusion.}* [Sūrah al-Nisā': 120]."

At that point, tyranny becomes a popular choice, silence becomes a culture, and compliance becomes a virtue. And so the project rises, not because it is upon the truth, but because it has perfected the taming of the flock. Allāh, the Exalted, said: *{And thus We have made for every prophet an enemy - devils from mankind and jinn, inspiring to one another decorative speech in delusion. But if your Lord had willed, they would not have done it, so leave them and that which they invent.}* [Sūrah al-An'ām: 112]. *{Say, [O Muḥammad], "Shall we inform you of the greatest losers as to*

²⁴ Ta'wīl Mukhtalif al-Ḥadīth (p. 62).

[their] deeds? [They are] those whose effort is lost in worldly life, while they think that they are doing well in work. Those are the ones who disbelieve in the verses of their Lord and in [their] meeting Him, so their deeds have become worthless; and We will not assign to them on the Day of Resurrection any weight. That is their recompense - Hell - for what they denied and [because] they took My verses and My messengers in ridicule."} [Sūrah al-Kahf: 103-106].

In this chapter, we open a file that has been silenced, which is the beating heart of the tragedy, not its tail: How was the popular base shaped to the measure of the leadership? How were the frames of reference replaced? How was the da‘wah reproduced through soft pulpits that cover deviation with argumentation? How was despotism normalized, criticism deemed treasonous, and the creedal memory of an entire generation falsified?

For the Sake of Shaping the Herd

In every pragmatic project that cloaks itself in religion, deviation does not begin with an upheaval in the texts, but with an upheaval in the souls. When throats fall silent from questioning and obedience becomes the mark of salvation, the Ummah is reduced to a decision, the da‘wah is condensed into a speech, and the creed is formulated to fit security needs. Here, the human being is no longer an actor, but one who is acted upon; awareness is no longer required, but rather repetition and compliance.

The popular base in the region of Hay‘at Tahrīr al-Shām's (HTS) project, before its expansion (and among its supporters abroad as well), was shaped not as a Muslim society with a mission, but as an audience that must be directed towards a single destination: protecting "the achievement." This audience is not viewed as a partner, but as a malleable substance to be placed within a unified discourse and obedient behavior. When we contemplate the discourse of the new authority, we find that it

does not stop at narrowing the circle of the Sharī‘ah; it empties the public consciousness of its creedal content and then refills it with the language of "interest," "necessity," and "fiqh of reality." By this, Jihād is transformed into a national narrative, the mujāhid becomes a police project or an employee, and the concepts of Ummah, disavowal (*al-barā’*), and creed are replaced with terms like "the entity," "stability," and "development." The Ummah is no longer the community of believers, but the borders of "Free Syria." The enemy is no longer the global Jāhilī system, but anyone who doubts the leadership.

This shaping reached its peak when we saw those who opposed HTS (before the fall of the regime and after it, in the name of the Syrian government) being pursued, defamed, and even imprisoned—not because they fought Muslims, but because they opposed the group or condemned evil. Shar‘ī scholars from "al-Qā‘idah" and others were imprisoned for no crime other than asking, "Where is the project?" or rejecting the pledge of allegiance of necessity. Meanwhile, the doors were opened to chameleons, "technocrats," and neutral parties who do not bother the leader but rather market his wisdom and realism.

The circle of control over consciousness was tightened through two parallel tracks:

1. **Direct security repression:** through the arrest of dissenters and the restriction of shaykhs who were not approved of.
2. **Soft stupefaction:** through activists affiliated with the "revolutionary movement" who speak in a modern language but entrench the servitude to reality, legitimize every decision, glorify every step, and dress cowardice as cunning and concession as a victory.

A new class of preachers, analysts, and opinion writers emerged, whose primary function is not to herald the project, but to tame the masses so they do not think of anything else: *{And when their messengers came to them with clear proofs, they*

rejoiced in what they had of knowledge, and they were enveloped by what they used to ridicule.} [Sūrah Ghāfir: 83]. Here, loyalty is no longer to the truth, but to the form of the state. Empowerment is not measured by the establishment of the dīn, but by the establishment of a local administrative body. People are not asked to believe in the principle, but to belong to the geography, submit to authority, and remain silent about falsehood. Thus, the people are turned into a herd, not because they do not think, but because they have been trained that thinking is an accusation, criticism is treason, and dissent is an evil whose consequences for the project are to be feared.

Policy of Replacing the Incubator

In major projects of change, the first thing to be targeted is the resistant mind, because it spoils the scene for the rest. A mind that preserves a pure memory, a firm frame of reference, and a position that does not change with the changing political climates. Allāh, the Exalted, said: *{And the eminent among the people of Pharaoh said, "Will you leave Moses and his people to cause corruption in the land and to abandon you and your gods?" [Pharaoh] said, "We will kill their sons and keep their women alive; and indeed, we are subjugators over them."}* [Sūrah al-Aʿrāf: 127]. Therefore, it was necessary to reshape the solid core of the project, not through conviction but through displacement. Thus began the phase of "recycling the jurists" under the cloak of the Jūlānī project, and what can be called the "new fatwá class" emerged.

The troublesome names were removed, and figures who were less rigid and more malleable were kept. At the forefront of these was Ibrāhīm Shāshū, who transitioned from a fierce tone in criminalizing sitting with the ṭawāghīt to smooth *fatāwā* that justify concessions under the pretext of "the victory of the revolution" and "changing circumstances." The tone changed, and with it, the position on many new issues, as if the Sharīʿah is recycled every time al-Jūlānī's position on the map changes.

Then comes ‘Abd al-Raḥīm ‘Aṭūn, who, with his weak scholarly tools and his clear fascination with al-Jūḷānī’s personality, represented the perfect model of the "organic muftī"—one who does not produce independent *fiqh* but translates the leadership's decisions into Shar‘ī expressions. His discourse is tainted with a soft *irjā’*; he does not see in al-Jūḷānī a politician who can be criticized, but a complete image of the "renewing leader" who does not err but rather exercises *ijtihād*, and who, if he makes a concession, it is for a wisdom that deficient minds cannot comprehend.

One cannot overlook the case of Maḥzar al-Ways, a man of radical transformations, from whom it was reported (a statement of strong conjecture among those who circulate it) that their *manhaj* during the days of "Jabhat al-Nuṣrah" was a "*manhaj* of Khawārij"! This is a statement that expresses not only a change in methodology but an upheaval in concepts and a complete readiness to disavow all that came before under the slogan "the phase required it."

Here it becomes clear that the project could not tolerate another opinion, even if it was voiced by a companion of yesterday or a shaykh of the path. Anyone who did not enter the fold was removed from the scene: imprisoned, silenced, defamed, or branded as a "troublemaker" or "unaware of reality." This was not a phase-specific *ijtihād*, but a fixed logic in administration: there is no place except for those who agree, and no survival except for the flexible.

Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ said: "The rational man should be hesitant to proceed with an opinion for which he finds no supporter, even if he thinks he is upon certainty."²⁵ But al-Jūḷānī was not hesitant to be solitary; rather, he made his solitude a certainty, the silence of others an applause, and the remaining of the compliant a proof for him against the absent. And so, minds are excluded, and consciousness is re-engineered in the image of one man.

²⁵ al-Adab al-Ṣaghīr (p. 28).

As for the "auxiliary pulpits," they went beyond that to farces in *fiqh*, as they used the *fatāwā* of al-Albānī, Ibn Bāz, and Ibn ‘Uthaymīn to prohibit demonstrations (during the revolutionary movement in the liberated areas) against HTS! These were the very *fatāwā* whose authors were once denigrated as "palace scholars," but today they have become the appropriate reference since they conform to the desires of the new authority. Here, the replacement of jurisprudential authorities becomes evident, not on the basis of methodological shifts—for al-Jūlānī did not convert from Jihādism to Salafism—but according to materialistic, utilitarian principles that care little for transcendent morals.

The Jūlānī discourse was not content with supplanting concepts and taming faces; it also used its security tools to silence all dissenting voices within. Thus, ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Mahdī was restricted, and accused of matters by supporters of the project following his repeated denunciations of HTS and his warnings about its path. Al-Zubayr al-Ghazzī was also imprisoned more than once for reasons the leadership did not disclose, and he was banned from teaching and public appearances. A number of figures who represented a clear Salafī trend, such as Yahyá al-Farghalī and others, were also restricted. These were the very faces who were previously a source for legitimizing HTS's fight against the men of "al-Qā‘idah" in al-Shām, and based on their *fatāwā*, the youth were suppressed and a number of them were killed. The circle of divine decree turned, and justice was taken from them; may Allāh guide them and purify them of their sins.

This new path had to be paved with the hands that had long raised the banner of Tawḥīd, and laid upon the backs of those who did not remain silent about the deviation. The internal campaign began against every honest voice and every Jihādī symbol who carried remnants of clarity in his heart. In return, those who would patch things up, justify, and derive a *fiqh* for every slip, an objective for every betrayal, and a necessity for every concession were brought in. This is how the jurist

is selected, not according to his knowledge, but according to his compliance. The authority is relied upon not for his Shar‘ī weight, but for his ability to craft a discourse that silences the inside and satisfies the outside.

The upheaval in the scene reached its peak when we saw those who were yesterday in the circle of enmity with Jihād and its creed transform today into "Islamic thinkers," "theorists of the phase," and "experts in managing the Jihādī project." Pulpits were prepared for them, spaces were opened for them, and they became the voice and face of the project. It is to the extent that one might imagine that if a sincere person were asked about the state of the arena today, it would suffice for him to reply with what Bakrī Muṣṭafā, that dissolute Turk, replied with, who "once schemed until they made him an imām in a mosque. They brought a funeral procession to pray over, so he bent over the deceased and leaned close to his ear as if whispering to him. He was asked, 'What did you say to him?' He said, 'I told him: If they ask you about the affairs of the world, do not prolong the talk; it is enough to say: Bakrī Muṣṭafā is the imām.'"²⁶ And if you ask about the state of Islamic discourse today, do not prolong the question: it is enough to say: so-and-so is a theorist, so-and-so is a thinker, and so-and-so is the shaykh of the era... then ask Allāh for well-being.

Emptying and Defiling the Minds

Perhaps the most dangerous thing an authority can practice in the name of religion is not distortion, but emptying; turning curricula from a tool for building awareness into a tool for reproducing ignorance, and turning training camps from factories of Jihād into factories of soldiers with no opinion and no creed.

The "Jūlānī project" began its first stages with Shar‘ī curricula of a Jihādī character, feeding on the books of the Salaf and the *fatāwā* of the scholars upon whose ideas

²⁶ ‘Alī al-Ṭanṭāwī, *Dhikrayāt* (vol. 1, p. 243)

modern Jihādī experiences were built. The discourse of loyalty and disavowal (*al-walā' wa-l-barā'*), the *takfīr* of the ṭawāghīt, and the inevitability of clashing with the apostate regimes were an essential part of the educational discourse. Then, this discourse soon began to erode, not through scholarly revisions, but through silent deletions, a gradual altering of references, and a dilution of content, until it became common to see a new soldier in the official apparatus who knows nothing of Jihād but its name, and has never heard in his life of the obligation to declare the ṭawāghīt as disbelievers or the danger of allying with the polytheists. Rather, you find him seeing in Saddam Hussein or Gaddafi a model of a just ruler who was slandered by the West!

These are not slips of the tongue, nor exceptions, but direct results of a new educational methodology whose goal is not to graduate mujāhidīn, but to "recruit citizens" in the manner of modern Arab armies: a weapon in hand, obedience in the heart, and an empty mind awaiting instructions. What was called the restructuring of armed factions under the banner of al-Jūlānī was not a unification upon a principle, nor a merger on a Shar'ī basis, but a dissolution of the creed within the crucible of personal loyalty, and a transformation of the project of Jihād from a bond of faith into a network of political allegiances, in which competence is evaluated by submission, and ranks are granted based on the degree of identification with the leader. What occurred in this process was not just the creation of a new system, but a deliberate execution of the old content and a systematic erasure of the creedal memory of Jihād. The great innovation here was not in the new slogans, but in the killing of the truth that preceded them and the uprooting of every voice that reminded the people of yesterday's *manhaj*. Imām al-Shāṭibī said: "If every innovation necessitates the death of a sunnah that opposes it, then the innovator also bears the sin of that. It is a sin in addition to the sin of innovating, and that sin is multiplied just as the sin of the innovation is multiplied by acting upon it, because every time it is renewed in word or deed, the killing of the sunnah is likewise

renewed in word."²⁷ Thus, every time the language of "the phase" and "the interest" was renewed, with it was renewed the burying of the *sunan* upon which the first Jihādī groups were founded. And every time a new realism was promoted, with it were erased the concepts of Tawḥīd, Jihād, and *al-walā' wa-l-barā'*, until nothing remained of Islam but titles managed by security decisions.

Everyone who carried remnants of creedal clarity or a Salafī position on issues of loyalty and disavowal, sovereignty (*ḥākimiyyah*), or the near and far enemy was excluded from the scene. Then, the field was opened to everyone who would give their full endorsement to the decisions of the "president," even if they were of the nature of nullifiers of the project (or of Islam). We saw how individuals like Abū 'Amshah and his ilk (about whom warning statements were previously published) were summoned to take over sensitive military joints—not for their knowledge or their creed, but for their dry loyalty and their ability to manage a modern militia according to the terms of the sponsor, not revelation. Thus, Jihād was transformed into a military job not linked to a project of an Ummah, but to a "centralized security system" that follows one person, moves by command, remains silent when ordered, and fights where ordered, without asking: Is this fight in the cause of Allāh? Or in the interest of a throne?

The most dangerous aspect of this type of organization is that it kills the meaning before it kills the person, and turns the mujāhid into a cog in the machine of power. Nothing connects him to Islam except the name of his faction, nothing to the Ummah except the emblem on his flag, and nothing to the Sharī'ah except the oath of loyalty to his commander. *{Those who took their religion as distraction and amusement and whom the worldly life deluded. So today We will forget them just as they forgot the meeting of this Day of theirs and for having rejected Our verses.}* [Sūrah al-A'rāf: 51].

²⁷ al-I'tiṣām (vol. 1, p. 212)

Because this sudden decline might raise concerns among the Jihādīs and the people of zeal, there had to be means of releasing pressure that would maintain balance without changing the course. Allowing some study circles and lessons of a Jihādī nature is not to raise a new generation on the *manhaj*, but to release internal pressure. These circles act as "safety valves" that prevent an explosion, not as centers of methodological revival that lay the foundation for change. At other times, channels to external fronts like Afghanistan or Africa might be opened for them, in a kind of clever discharge, to get rid of elements inconsistent with the project by emptying them into distant battles, without the project having to liquidate them internally or confront them.

It is a systematic transformation of the creed from a beacon to an ornament, and from an educational methodology to a commodity subject to modification according to the mood of the phase. It is no surprise if a whole generation of soldiers arises who knows nothing about the difference between Jihād and dependency, who sees in their leadership's concessions nothing but a type of *fiqh*, and in its opponents nothing but the "Khawārij of the age."

Religion for Political Display, Not Creedal Stance

The most dangerous thing that can befall a project attributed to Islam is the transformation of religion from a creed of fighting and building into a consumable political product, displayed in the market not for the worship of Allāh, but to embellish the authority, please various parties, reassure adversaries, and be consumed by the general public without changing anything in them. Allāh, the Exalted, said: *{Have you seen he who has taken as his god his own desire, and Allāh has sent him astray due to knowledge and has set a seal upon his hearing and his heart and put over his vision a veil? So who will guide him after Allāh? Then will you not be reminded?}* [Sūrah al-Jāthiyah: 23].

Islam, in the Jūlānī discourse, has become a flexible commodity, subject to packaging and wrapping according to the needs of the political moment. When the interest requires pleasing the masses, the slogan of the Sharīʿah is raised, the old tune of implementing the *ḥudūd* is replayed, and the حديث of empowerment is invoked. But if necessity dictates passing a major concession, a soft normalization, or a security agreement with the occupiers, what turns all of this into a "paramount interest," a "fiqh of reality," and a "state of incapacity" is quickly extracted from the treasuries of *fiqh*.

Thus, Islam descended from the station of creed to the level of discourse; it is not relied upon to direct decisions, but to adorn the decision after it has been made. This is the essence of the deviation: keeping religion as a symbolic garb while emptying it of its Jihādī content and diluting it to suit the conditions of the modern state and the demands of regional and international sponsors.

How often are phrases like "ruling by the Sharīʿah" and "Islamic frame of reference" circulated in the discourse of the authority today, to the point that some people thought the Jūlānī project represented a new breakthrough in the history of Islamic movements. But reality belies the slogans: there is no rule of Allāh, no loyalty to His allies, and no enmity towards the ṭawāghīt, but rather a soft packaging that covers up grave concessions.

Thus, the experience of the Islamo-democratic states is repeated, in whose constitutions it is declared that the Sharīʿah is a "primary source," yet it ends up at the bottom of consideration, if not in the line of fire. As Shaykh Abū Yaḥyā al-Lībī said: "People grew accustomed to that life, got used to it, and became familiar with the contradictions. It is no surprise that the first clause in the constitution of those Islamized states is: 'The Islamic Sharīʿah is the primary source of legislation,' while the rest of its points and articles do not even place it at the end of the list in terms of application, implementation, and reverence. Rather, it is a war on its rulings, a

demolition of its principles, and a stripping of its people of all its values, manners, and morals."²⁸ If this is the state of countries that did not raise the banner of Jihād, what then of one who raised it for an age and then tore it apart in the name of interest, adorned desertion with the letters of "fiqh of the phase," and clothed the banner in the garb of an authority that is ashamed to declare its enmity to the enemies of Allāh?

What has occurred here is not a falsification of titles, but the complete construction of an alternative creed that rests on flimsy justifications, vague concepts, and slogans that contradict the definitive principles of the Book and the Sunnah. A dīn marketed to sponsors and supporters, not to the people, and tailored to the size of geography, not the texts. Shaykh al-Islām said: "This is why the Salaf and the Imāms condemned innovated theology (*kalām*), for its proponents err either in their issues or in their proofs. They often build the dīn of the Muslims regarding belief in Allāh, His books, and His messengers on weak, even corrupt, foundations, and they commit themselves to implications that cause them to contradict sound scripture and clear reason."²⁹ For the people have replaced the principle of loyalty with the flag, the principle of sovereignty with the decisions of councils, and the principle of disassociation with the "fiqh of international relations." They built their religious system on political conceptions and then demanded that the dīn conform to them. If it agreed, it was celebrated; if it disagreed, it was reinterpreted or buried.

Even more than that: religiosity itself has become conditional on obedience to the state. The scholar who blesses the leadership gets pulpits, media appearances, and Sharʿī councils. But whoever criticizes the path of obstructing the Sharʿah or warns against the sidelining of the creed is a saboteur, a malcontent, or an agent. Then, if the matter persists, he becomes an "enemy of the state," and perhaps an "enemy of Ahl al-Sunnah." Religion itself has been reformulated to be a tool of control, not a

²⁸ al-Aʿmāl al-Kāmilah; al-Turs fī al-Jihād al-Muʿāṣir (vol. 1, p. 174)

²⁹ Sharḥ al-Aṣfahāniyyah (p. 658)

tool of liberation, just as contemporary Islamo-democratic models wanted it, and as many international circles—who do not fear Islam if it becomes a tool of social control and a spiritual ritual used to legitimize the state rather than hold it accountable or overthrow it—seek.

This is not the implementation of the Sharī‘ah, but the marketing of an Islam without might, without loyalty, and without disavowal. An Islam marketed according to international standard specifications, which reassures the West and does not frighten it. It is suitable for political propaganda and does not disturb the regimes. An Islam that suits the times and is promoted through screens and seminars, but is incapable of producing a single man who will stand in the face of falsehood.

And so, instead of Islam being the driving force for the revolution, it has become a cover for it. Instead of Jihād being a project to change the world, it has become a means of convincing the world that this authority is moderate, disciplined, and "just like you"... even if it retains some outward appearances of its Islamic past.

Manufacturing the Herd in the Name of Leadership

The Jūlānī project has succeeded in one thing with distinction: manufacturing an obedient herd, not a community of believers. A herd moved by the media, controlled by security, and fed by a soft discourse saturated with phrases like "the phase," "the interest," and "the conspiracy." This manufacturing has been accomplished through a meticulous tripartite engineering: isolating the Jihādī generation, emptying creedal education, and placating the religious with remnants of religious feelings managed under the eye of security and monitored by intelligence agencies.

The purpose of this hollowed-out religion is no longer to build a generation that fights for the sake of Tawḥīd, but to produce a good citizen in a bad state. A citizen who prays, but does not disturb; who learns, but does not object; who is raised on

obedience, not on the obligatory duty. It is as if we are facing a hybrid version of soldiery: soldiery in the Jihādī style in form, and in the functional style in substance.

As for those from whom it is hoped they would stand against this decline—the Shar‘ī scholars, the callers, and the thinkers—most of them have chosen the position of the "accompanying guide": giving the path a Shar‘ī character without intervening in it. They bless the politician, discipline the public, and reduce all of Jihād to the "interest of the phase." And whoever opposes this line is sent to the prisons, or to silence, or to moral and media isolation.

And so the "flock of birds" was reshaped, not to follow the truth, but to follow the leader. Not to march towards Jihād, but towards power. Not to proclaim the truth, but to sing for a delusional victory and a "manifest conquest." And if Ibn Qutaybah said, "People are like flocks of birds, one following the other," then today we see the one leading this flock, not with a heavenly message, but with a man-made road map, in which there is everything except the creed.

*If a crow is to be the guide of a people,
It will lead them only to the carcasses of dogs.*

It is no wonder, then, that the journey is one of destruction, and that the "manifest victory" is but the gateway to the end.

Chapter Three: Ideologizing the Creed

Creed (‘*aqīdah*’) is not a collection of slogans to be brandished when rallying the national herd, nor is it a sectarian color with which we adorn civil wars. Rather, it is the scale by which we weigh positions, and the direction toward which we orient our compass in matters of loyalty and disavowal (*al-walā’ wa-l-barā’*), enmity and support, and peace and war. However, when movements fall from the station of Islamic da‘wah to the pits of Jāhili politics and are afflicted with methodological

blindness, the creed transforms from a standard that illuminates the path into a raw material to be shaped in the form of interest and repackaged within the narrative of the ruling authority.

We have witnessed how the creed has been sidelined from the center of decision-making, while at the same time being prominent—not in the form of a truth that frees necks, but in the image of slogans that mobilize the masses, justify division and conflict, and establish false loyalties. Sunnism has become a cultural label, brandished by those who do not know how to pray, do not read the Qur'ān, and give no weight to loyalty to Allāh, yet they see in their hatred of the "Khārijī" or the "Rāfiḍī" proof of the soundness of their belief!

In this chapter, we will approach these ugly transformations: from the moment "creed" was replaced with "nationalism," to the moment enmity was priced to suit the market, and then to the stage of distorting the Shar'ī scale in favor of visceral hatred and partisan interest.

In the complex Syrian scene, the creed, for many people, seems to revolve between two hatreds: a historical hatred for the Rāfiḍah, fed by a historical legacy of religious and political conflicts, which then flared up with the calamity of al-Asad and his allies from "Hezbollah" and the militias of Iran, causing the Sunnī identity to sometimes be reduced to sectarian animosity. And in contrast, a hatred for the adherents of the explicit Jihādī manhaj, considering them "Dā'ishīs" and a project of fitnah and violence. This second group is of two types: a group captivated by the global media, which has classified all Jihād outside of state institutions as misguided terrorism, and so they have swallowed this classification and followed it without examining the reality of the manhaj and the position. And a group that originally arose in a pragmatic environment (like HTS, its supporters, and some factions), which in its beginnings was closer to the line of Jihād, but then gradually deviated

until it came to see its past as a past of extremism, its banner as the banner of the Khawārij, and its manhaj as a naive deviation that must be disavowed.

Between these two groups, the voice of Tawḥīd was lost, the scale of loyalty to Allāh and disavowal of His enemies was crushed, and people turned into factions that define themselves by what they hate, not by what they believe, and build their creed on verbal clashes, not on the principles of the Book and the Sunnah.

The Sunnī Identity and the Loss of Tawḥīd

Sunnism was never merely a cultural identity or a civilizational title with which we confront others. Rather, it was a practical interpretation of the creed of Tawḥīd, a real manifestation of the scales of *al-walā' wa-l-barā'*, and a clear position against the tyrannical systems of kufr. Sunnism was the *manhaj* for which tyrants are fought, by which the proof is established against the people, and under whose banner allegiance and obedience, concession and steadfastness are offered. But in an era of chameleonic change and decline, this creed has transformed from a solid entity into a hollow slogan, and from a firm Tawḥīdī meaning into a ready-made identity used to fill the streets and deceive the popular base. Sunnism in the contemporary consciousness no longer means "ruling by the law of Allāh and rejecting the ṭāghūt." Instead, it has come to mean: hating Iran, cursing Naṣrallāh, insulting al-Baghdādī, fighting al-Qā'idah, and then turning a blind eye to the Americans—and sometimes even defending their proxies and promoting their allies, like the ṭawāghīt of Saudi Arabia and the UAE!

In Syria, we saw how Sunnism was made into a battle against the sectarian Shī'ī and then the takfīrī Khārijī—not as ṭawāghīt who oppose the Sharī'ah of Allāh, but as adversaries in a battle of sectarian identities. The image of the "Shī'ī" enemy was inflated in the consciousness of the common people (and many religious students) until he became the symbol of all kufr. Similarly, the "Khārijī," in the eyes of the

fighters, came to represent any criticism of the regime or obstruction of the revolution. In the same context, the image of the American, Russian, Turkish, or Gulf enemy was reduced to political details over which it is not permissible to divide the ranks, and for which the leader is not to be blamed for allying with. A hybrid marriage was consummated between the "discourse of Sunnism" and the "security of the American ally," and between "cursing the Rāfiḍah and the Khawārij" and "remaining silent about the protectors of the ṭawāghīt."

This transformation was not spontaneous; it was reformulated and nurtured by media and da‘wah institutions that plant blind hatred instead of understanding and empty Sunnism of its Tawḥīdī essence to make it a political tool in the hands of the authority.

The principles have been overturned and the scales have been altered. Loyalty is now built on your position towards the Shī‘ah, not the ṭāghūt. Cursing terrorism has become the sufficient condition to earn the blessing of Sunnism, even if you ally with all the rulers of the Gulf, collude with the Americans and the Turks, lay down your arms in the face of the Jews, and violate the foundation of the dīn. This is the greatest danger: when religion transforms into an identity and creed into a banner, Jihād is disfigured, loyalty is distorted, and peoples are led into imaginary battles while the real enemy watches and laughs.

The Deviation of the Compass

It is one of the sunan of Allāh in projects of change that they begin with purity of purpose and clarity of objective, only to soon be tested with the most dangerous trial: the test of the compass. The greatest dilemma is not in the scarcity of provisions, nor in the brutality of the enemy, but in the change of direction. Among the greatest trials that afflicted the revolution of al-Shām, and then the Jihād project within it, was the shifting of the war's compass from confronting the enemy of the

Ummah to chasing after rivals and dissenters, to the point where preoccupation with the smaller enemy was prioritized over confronting the greater enemy—and was even justified as being from "Shar'ī wisdom"!

We have lived through a time when the banners of Jihād were raised in the face of America, Russia, and the rest of the ṭawāghīt. We used to read on their media platforms praises for the strikes of "September 11" and articles about the enemy residing in the Pentagon and the Kremlin. Al-Jūlānī himself even admitted (in his first interviews) that the events of "September" were the turning point that pushed him to embark on the path of Jihād and that he was influenced by the global *manhaj* of al-Qā'idah in directing the battle to the root of the enmity: America, which obstructs the rise of our Ummah and prevents the implementation of our Lord's Sharī'ah.

So where did all this discourse go? Where did that consciousness, which connects the survival of functional regimes with the hegemony of military, political, and economic colonialism, disappear? How was the great truth, which all seekers of freedom in the world have cried out, erased: that there can be no sovereignty, no independence, and no dīn in the presence of the system of Western hegemony?!

The compass has been replaced. The masses are no longer mobilized to fight the occupation in the south, nor to seek revenge on the Russians who turned Aleppo into ashes, nor to avenge the Americans who annihilated Muslims in various parts of the world. Instead, they are mobilized to respond to a statement of denunciation, a fatwá from an independent scholar, or a small faction that has not pledged allegiance to the amīr. The enemy that must be defamed, whose popular base must be fragmented, and whose soldiers must be pursued, has become the one who "did not understand the reality," or "went against the interest," or "showed disrespect to the leadership"!

Thus, the project of the Ummah transformed into the project of a leader. The global battle with the system of worldwide tyranny transformed into trivial skirmishes in the back alleys of Syria. And the Jihādī discourse transformed from being a cry in the face of global arrogance into empty clamor against internal dissenters.

It would have been more fitting for one who speaks in the name of Jihād to preserve the priorities of the battle: for proclaiming enmity towards America to remain an unshakeable principle, for confronting the Zionist project to remain a permanent duty not subject to the calculations of the moment, and for events to be read through the eyes of the Ummah, not the eyes of the faction. These are the Jihādī (revolutionary) gains that the mujāhidīn have sought for decades, only for some of those who came after them, who regressed, to demolish the entire structure. What happened was that the state project—with its personal ambition and obsession with survival—produced a new discourse that makes the conflict with the real enemy a file to be "postponed until further notice," while the enmity directed inward is the "current interest," the "required wisdom," and the "urgent necessity"!

Criticism of the deviation from Jihād has turned into an accusation of fitnah, and the dissenter who reminds people of the sayings of the scholars has become a dagger in the side of the project, because the project has become above the Sharī‘ah and above the Ummah.

This shift in the direction of enmity is not a simple deviation; it is an existential catastrophe. A project that loses its compass of enmity loses its reason for existence and becomes a tool in the functional conflict, not the bearer of a liberation project. The moment the rifle turns from the chests of the tyrants to the heads of the dissenters, it becomes the rifle of a mercenary, not the rifle of a mujāhid. And the moment the voices proclaiming the truth are silenced because the enemy does not like to hear them, the spirit of the revolution for which the masses rose is silenced along with them.

Visceral Hatred and the Politicization of the Creed

What can peoples do when they lose their moral and Shar‘ī scale? Nothing, except to surrender their minds to the loudspeakers, their hearts to the television channels, and their souls to the preachers of shame. A generation is then born that judges people by its own psychological creed, not by the scale of the Sharī‘ah, and draws the map of *al-walā’ wa-l-barā’* with inherited animosity, not with a disciplined position.

This is what happened in Idlib, and this is how the Sunnī mind is being reshaped anew throughout Syria, through mechanisms that mix the pain of the past with the instinct of revenge, and a truncated creed with a deluded popular mindset. The creed is no longer a regulating *manhaj* as it was in the early Salafī mind, nor a liberation project as formulated by the Jihādī current. Instead, it has transformed into an identity card defended just as a secularist defends the garbage of his ideas: with shouting, fanaticism, and a great deal of ignorance.

You speak to people about the Shī‘ah, and you do not see in their words the discipline of the rulings transmitted from the jurists. Instead, you see images from memory, clips from the news, and popular narratives mixed with all our disappointments. You talk to them about the principles of the Khawārij, the regulations for applying the label, and the rulings for dealing with them, and you find yourself (without any introduction) a Khārijī defending the Khawārij—a purely "Jāmī" mentality. The hatred is deeply rooted, but it is not hatred for the sake of Allāh and in Allāh. It is the hatred of sectarian wars, the memories of Hama, the stories of prison cells, and the images of the corpses of sons. Everyone speaks with the tongue of the Sharī‘ah, but the Sharī‘ah is relegated to a corner, neither consulted nor invoked, except when someone needs a fatwá to justify his ignorance.

This popular hatred—which is in its essence a mixture of a wounded memory and a plundered mind—has transformed into a complete scale for judging sects, groups, and people, to the point that the common people judge a person's Islam by his hatred! If he declares the Shī'ah to be disbelievers, he is, in their view, an authentic Muslim. But if he speaks with the scale of the Sharī'ah, he becomes suspect or a pro-Shī'ah sympathizer.

And so, the scale of *al-walā' wa-l-barā'* was dismantled into two parts: the first is created by popular circles and bloody memories, and the second is cloaked in the mantle of a fatwá by some shaykhs, preachers, and pseudo-political analysts. They make hatred of Shi'ism and terrorism the key to entry into the Sunnī community, even if the person is originally an oppressor, ignorant, or has abandoned the dīn of Allāh. Is this the legacy that Jibrīl brought down to Muḥammad ﷺ? Is this the creed of the Companions, who fought the Khawārij without malice, debated the Jews without insults, and traveled through the lands of the Persians and Romans as conveyors of the message?

The young Jihādī who was raised on the idea that the battle is with America now recoils to fight "terrorism" under the umbrella of the nations' ṭawāghīt—not because the "terrorist" occupies land or fights us, but because he threatens civil peace and national stability, while American drones roam over his head without a single curse being directed at them. Indeed, many of those loyal to the Jūlānī line have started to justify alliances with America, while they cannot forgive a Sunnī living in Gaza for not cursing the Rāfiḍah!

The compass does not lie, but it breaks when you place it in the hand of an ignorant person and then ask him to determine the direction for you. And so these masses marched on, fighting the less dangerous enemy (or the friend whose affair the enemy has confused for them) and surrendering their necks to the greater enemy. They fight out of hatred and negotiate out of realism. They issue *fatāwā* out of anger

and pledge allegiance based on mood. They declare someone a disbeliever by the scent of a name, then lecture on the importance of moderation and diversity! And so the creed was lost. Not because it is difficult, but because the one who carried it was ignorant of it, arrogant in his temperament, and saturated with his identity, not weighing matters by the scale of the Sharī'ah, but by the scale of the masses' hatreds.

The compass is not manufactured in the offices of politicians; it is extracted from the Book of Allāh, the Sunnah of His Messenger, and the guidance of the sincere mujāhidīn. Whoever loses it is lost, even if he prays and fasts and claims to be a Muslim.

Chapter Four: Methodological Hues

People may differ in their judgment of a certain man, and they may excuse one another due to differences in *ijtihād* and perspective, or due to the multiple possible analyses of a complex personality. However, they do not differ in their judgment of a principle, nor in their condemnation of a blatant contradiction that is justified neither by political wisdom, nor the pretexts of necessity, nor the requirements of the phase. When contradiction becomes a dominant feature, chameleon-like change becomes a principle, and transformation becomes a new religion, then know that the issue is no longer a matter of political *ijtihād*, but a crisis of *manhaj*, a sickness of the project, and a schism of the compass.

We are not talking about a partial shift in the discourse of a politician, but about an integrated project that began under the banner of "ruling by the Sharī'ah" and then soon transformed into a soft secular system, wearing the cloak of the Sharī'ah and speaking with the tongue of public interest, but in reality, practicing everything that

contradicts revelation, reason, and conscience. The joints of this project are not understood from Friday sermons or Al Jazeera interviews, but by tracking its historical behavior, analyzing its discursive transformations, comparing its words with its actions, and deconstructing the intellectual, media, and Sharīʿ structure that provides it with a false legitimacy and beautifies it before a public that still reads events with the eye of an illiterate, not with the methodology of knowledge.

Al-Jūḷānī presented himself (after breaking away from al-Qāʿidah) as a nationalist Islamic leader with a local vision, then as a moderate Islamic official with an international vision, and then as the president of the Syrian Republic (with an Islamic history) who offers his commitments only to Western parties and apostate minorities. Along this path, he went through a strange cycle of contradictions that are hardly united by anything other than the interest of power.

This chapter is an attempt to deconstruct the Jūḷānī methodology of contradiction—not for the sake of sensationalism or debate, but because we believe that building any alternative project must begin by exposing the falsehood of the established model, revealing its contradictions, and stripping it even of its last Sharīʿ and media cloaks. For the truth does not accept chameleonic change, and the *manhaj* cannot tolerate all this absurdity.

From Implementing the Sharīʿah to Muffling It

From the first moment al-Jūḷānī appeared in the arenas of al-Shām, talk of the Sharīʿah was the bridge he crossed to reach the hearts of the fighters and sympathizers; indeed, it was the keyword in all his mobilization discourse. The Sharīʿah was raised as the axis of the project and the core of the objective, not merely as a political tool. The fighters did not take up arms for the sake of land or for abstract dignity, but rather they went out to realize the servitude to Allāh on earth,

to build an entity that rules by the law of Allāh, to break the shackle of disbelieving citizenship, and to liberate the Ummah from man-made constitutions.

Traditional political Islam groups, like the "Muslim Brotherhood," were long described as proponents of a distorted implementation and a circumvention of the texts. Indeed, al-Jūlānī himself used to see in the project of Mohamed Morsi in Egypt, the "Ennahda" movement in Tunisia, the Islamic parties in Turkey, and others, that they had altered and distorted, and that they were not an extension of the Islamic awakening, but highway robbers blocking its path.

In his early speeches, especially during the "Jabhat al-Nuṣrah" phase, al-Jūlānī would repeat the grand meanings that were established in the literature of the Jihādī *manhaj*: "Sovereignty belongs to Allāh (*ḥākimiyyah*), the invalidity of democracy, the kufr of the constitution, the invalidity of civil political action, the rejection of the United Nations charter, the *takfīr* of whoever is content with the rule of the ṭāghūt or defends the sanctuary of the nation-state..." These rules were among the axioms that were not debated in the lectures of the training camps, the *manhaj* lessons, or the purification sessions. The organization at that time was keen on purifying and sifting new arrivals with pragmatic backgrounds ("Ikhwān," Da'wah, Surūrī...) lest they introduce fluid concepts into the project's structure.

Indeed, the position on Turkish President Erdoğan (which is the most indicative) was between political criminalization and creedal *takfīr*. Internal Shar'ī documents circulated explicit *fatāwā* declaring him a disbeliever for his rule by a secular constitution, his cooperation with NATO, his relations with the Zionists, and his protection of American airbases. This talk was circulated not only in closed circles but even in public sessions, mosques, and recorded meetings. It was conveyed on the tongues of the leadership, the Shar'ī scholars, and the early soldiers that the "AKP" party was a version of Islamized secularism and that it was more dangerous to the

Ummah than its external enemy because it wears the garb of religion and infiltrates from within.

The ground has shifted underfoot, and not a single statement has been issued to explain how or why. Suddenly, Erdoğan became the "guarantor," Turkey the "most prominent supporter," and its flag was raised in the streets of the liberated areas before the fall of the regime. Security and military bases were opened under its sponsorship, and political, security, and economic paths were linked to its decisions. No one told the people: why did we fall silent about the "clear kufr" that we were screaming about yesterday? And no one explained how we moved from rejecting democracy to promoting ballot boxes.

From Glorifying the Raid to Declaring War on Terrorism

Al-Jūlānī began his journey in harmony with the discourse of al-Qāʿidah, fascinated by its project, defending the "September" raid, and openly declaring enmity towards the West. But he soon changed his skin after settling his regional and international status, until he began to court his adversaries, adopt the language of counter-terrorism, and present his project as an entity capable of normalization and internationalization, after he had closed the file of global Jihād and buried with it the banner of Tawḥīd.

Here the most important question arises: is it conceivable that Jihād—which is the firm rope of Allāh and the cause of the Ummah's unity—be replaced with a secular discourse that divides the ranks and dissipates strength? Al-Jūlānī forgot—or feigned forgetfulness—that Islamic history proves that the Ummah does not unite except under the banner of Jihād and does not disintegrate except when it abandons it. Shaykh Abū Yaḥyā al-Lībī said: "One of the greatest causes for the unity of the Ummah and the removal of its disunity is Jihād in the cause of Allāh the Exalted. For this reason, whenever the Ummah has abandoned it and deserted its arenas,

disputes have crept in among them, and conflict has spread through their limbs. Their disunity can hardly be lifted except by Jihād, and Jihād does not bear its full fruit except with unity. They are two matters in the utmost correlation, as Shaykh al-Islām ﷺ said: 'If the people abandon Jihād in the cause of Allāh, He may test them by causing enmity to arise among them until fitnah occurs among them, as is the reality. For when the people are occupied with Jihād in the cause of Allāh, Allāh unites their hearts, brings them together, and turns their might against the enemy of Allāh and their own enemy. And if they do not go forth in the cause of Allāh, Allāh punishes them by making them sects and causing some of them to taste the might of others.'"³⁰ So, was al-Jūlānī's turn against Jihād a partial plan to achieve the implementation of the Sharī'ah? Or was it a severing of the artery that connects the Ummah to its dīn and its destiny?

The call to Tawhīd is not reduced to mere proclamation; it begins with the removal of the ṭāghūt who prevents people from hearing the truth and choosing it freely. Before the people are told to say "Lā ilāha illā Allāh," the sword of the one who imposes otherwise must be lifted from them, and the authority of the one who suppresses its people must be overthrown. For this reason, the prophets were not preachers in the courts of kings, but their adversaries. Their call was not a project of religious education under the protection of the Jāhilī system, but a call for liberation that frees the necks before it reforms the minds. When the da'wah project is separated from the movement of political removal, it transforms into a preachy Sufism that serves the ṭāghūt from where the caller does not realize. What is presented as wise gradualism is, in reality, a malicious adaptation that makes the da'wah a cover for preserving the status quo, not an entry point for its overthrow.

And so, political neutrality was redefined to become a negation of religious identity, and the tyrannical system was reproduced, but this time with a turban. And because

³⁰ al-A' māl al-Kāmilah; Tabdīd li-Abāṭīl Wathīqat al-Tarshīd (vol. 1, p. 658), and the text of Ibn Taymiyyah in "Majmū' al-Fatāwā" (vol. 15, p. 44)

all this is done with a packaging of "higher objectives," every objection to this coup is accused of lacking "fiqh of the phase" or of irresponsible extremism. But the clear truth is that the Jūlānī project became a project subject to internationalization only because it abandoned being Islamic in its essence, and because it became suitable for international consumption after it changed its skin, buried its slogans, and severed its connection to the banner it first carried.

In his recent speeches, he has begun to refer to extremism as an existing danger in al-Shām and to call for its purification from undisciplined groups—the very groups that were his partners in the trenches of battle and his comrades in the early wars. They have now become an obstacle on the path to international recognition and a threat to the file of funding and relief, so it was necessary to uproot them, nationalize the discourse, and send clear messages to the West: "We are not supporters of September; we are its opponents."

It is the historical paradox that Abū Yaḥyā al-Lībī warned of. While the new "mujahidīn" are busy pursuing yesterday's comrades under the slogan of combating extremism, the Crusader and Zionist powers are granted an unprecedented truce to sort out their affairs! Shaykh Abū Yaḥyā said: "Reviving the Crusader and Zionist forces and their apostate allies, and giving them an opportunity to catch their breath and arrange their affairs, is done by preoccupying the mujāhidīn with such whirlwinds that are stirred up from time to time, magnifying them, inflating them, and making them a decisive matter in the course of Jihādī work. When the mujāhidīn are absorbed in them and turn to them completely with their responses, discussions, altercations, and follow-ups, and spend much of their time, effort, and thought on them, their enemies seize the opportunity of their inattention and preoccupation to pass their projects, spread their poisons, arrange their affairs, strengthen their positions, and consolidate their footholds. This is something the mujāhidīn should always be aware of, whether in a document like this or similar matters where they

notice the media taking the lead in inflating it, publicizing it, and focusing on its importance. Let them know that they have only one path to establish the dīn, spread justice, and cut off the root of oppression and the oppressors, and that is fighting in the cause of Allāh the Exalted: *{And fight them until there is no fitnah and [until] the religion, all of it, is for Allāh. And if they cease - then indeed, Allāh is Seeing of what they do.}* [al-Anfāl: 39]. If there were another way to remove fitnah—that is, shirk and turning people away from the path of Allāh—and for the religion to be entirely for Allāh other than fighting, our Lord ﷻ would have guided us to it. So do not occupy yourself with the trifles of the marketplace or the side paths. *{Or do you say that Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the Descendants were Jews or Christians? Say, "Are you more knowing or is Allāh?" And who is more unjust than one who conceals a testimony he has from Allāh? And Allāh is not unaware of what you do.}* [al-Baqarah: 140]. Do not give your enemies an opportunity to enjoy security, relief, or thought. Know that whatever anxiety, grief, pain, and hardship befalls you, they have the like of it and more, as our Lord ﷻ said: *{And do not weaken in pursuit of the enemy. If you should be suffering - so are they suffering as you are suffering, but you expect from Allāh that which they do not expect. And Allāh is ever Knowing and Wise.}* [al-Nisā': 104]. And He ﷻ said: *{If a wound should touch you - there has already touched the [opposing] people a wound similar to it. And these days [of varying conditions] We alternate among the people so that Allāh may make evident those who believe and [may] take to Himself from among you martyrs - and Allāh does not like the wrongdoers.}* [Āl 'Imrān: 140].³¹ Did al-Jūlānī realize that by igniting an internal war against the extremists and the Khawārij, he has turned himself into an unpaid guard for the Zionist project?

This transformation can only be described as a coup against the Jihādī compass and against the project of resistance itself—not a phase-specific plan, but an alternative strategy. It seems al-Jūlānī has decided that the Jihādī project in its historical form

³¹ al-A' māl al-Kāmilah; Tabdīd li-Abāṭil Wathīqat al-Tarshīd (vol. 1, pp. 588-589)

has been exhausted and that the need now is for a realistic, recognized project that is reconciled with the international community, even if it is at the expense of all previous discourses, all the blood that was shed, and all the promises that were made on the pulpits.

From the Promise of Conquest to the Project of Normalization

In every early speech by al-Jūlanī—back when his turban was black and his words were distilled from the ink of the martyrs' blood—Jerusalem (al-Quds) shone from between his lines. He would mention it repeatedly as a central issue, not just for its geography.

Al-Quds at that time was the grand compass, and the promise to march towards it was a natural extension of an al-Qā'idah-style vision that believes Jihād is indivisible and that the liberation of al-Shām is but one link in the long chain of Jihād, which connects Kabul to Gaza and opens the path from Damascus to al-Aqsā. Many of his supporters would circulate phrases from the meaning or wording of his speech, such as: "We do not stop at the borders of Sykes-Picot," "We fight in al-Shām with our eyes on Bayt al-Maqdis." These slogans were the moral anthem of that generation who believed they were fighting in the battle of the Ummah.

However, it was only a few years before all these slogans turned into an audio legacy, not much different from old anthems that do not fit the new stage.

Bayt al-Maqdis became an issue that is not mentioned, or mentioned with caution, or replaced with "slogans of shared values, freedom, and dignity." The compass of the discourse shifted from heralding the conquest to theorizing about normalization—and even to building a soft discourse about "regional stability," "respect for international sovereignty," and "commitment to international charters,"

the very terms that were once used to accuse his opponents of treason and brand them with "secularism and defeatism."

Al-Jūlānī gradually closed the file of Palestine—not all at once, but as part of a long-term plan to change the priorities of the *manhaj* and distance the creedal consciousness from the masses of the Ummah, until al-Quds no longer had any place in the slogans of the "Syrian Government" or in its literature.

Here, the falsehood of al-Jūlānī's claim that his transformations stem from self-revisions or an objective evaluation of the mistakes of the previous phase is exposed! Mujāhidīn correct their path by returning to the Sharī'ah, not by prostrating to the conditions of the dollar and international recognition. As for the revisions that al-Jūlānī is leading today, they resemble nothing but those planned by "counter-terrorism" institutions, where religious discourse is reshaped to harmonize with the agenda of "regional stability"! Shaykh Abū Yaḥyā said: "The mujāhidīn—as far as we know—are the group most critical of themselves, correcting their path, and admitting their mistakes, not based on the directives and guidance of 'security agencies' and the 'RAND Corporation' and its likes, but in pursuit of the truth, returning to it, and loving it, no matter the consequence or embarrassment it may cost them."³² It is no surprise after this that we see "Hay'at Taḥrīr al-Shām" changing its positions whenever intelligence reports change and justifying its coups with the "fiqh of the phase," while in reality, it is practicing nothing but the fiqh of dependency! If their revisions were sincere, they would have admitted that they replaced the *manhaj* of Jihād with a "certificate of good conduct" from the enemies of the Ummah, and they would have returned to the dīn before history forced them to return!

But what was more dangerous than that was not the denial of the connection, but the nature of the relationships that began to form with suspicious circles, with

³² al-A' māl al-Kāmilah; Tabdīd li-Abāṭīl Wathīqat al-Tarshīd (vol. 1, p. 574)

journalists affiliated with Zionist lobbying organizations, and with international agencies that see the separation of al-Shām from Palestine as one of the most important strategic goals to secure Israel's borders and isolate the fronts of resistance from each other. The new government began to behave as the regimes of "Arab moderation" do: it does not speak of Palestine except to save face, and it does not deal with it with a creedal methodology but with a sensitive political decision, where positions are subject to the balance of interests and international pressures. With time, the relationship with the Palestinian cause will no longer be measured by a Sharʿī position, but by the extent of international embarrassment or security classification it causes. Everything that might upset America or suggest "support for terrorism" must be excluded from the discourse, even if it is a sacred creed.

Then came foreign relations to put the final nail in the coffin of the cause. Security coordination with normalizing countries, media facilitation for correspondents affiliated with the pro-Israel current, and turning a blind eye to offensive statements from local allies—all of this was done in the context of the "battle against terrorism" and in order to convince the West that HTS has changed, that it no longer threatens regional stability, nor does it aspire to export the revolution or Jihād. Indeed, Western delegations were received (implicitly or through fronts) without any consideration for their position on Palestine, as long as they grant "implicit legitimacy" to the local government.

And so, the cause was not sold in a deal as was done in "Oslo," but was slowly taken off the path, within a new engineering of consciousness that not only drops Palestine from the map but drops the entire Ummah from the mind and replaces it with the "local reality," where the dream sleeps and the calculations awaken.

Was He Hiding Secularism from the Beginning?

This question is posed today not as a passing doubt, but as a headline that presses upon the soul, with many theories and behaviors being regulated by its answer. It is for anyone who wants to understand the outcomes of the Jūlānī project and to deconstruct the hidden logic that governs its sharp transitions since his coup against al-Qā'idah, leading to his engineering of an administrative entity that resembles in its features most of the modern models that the Jihādī current has long confronted with *takfīr* and confrontation. The question here is not about an isolated political decision or an erroneous *ijtihād* in a circumstantial moment, but about a mental structure that was present in the background of the scene from the first moment, but had not yet gathered all its tools.

Were these misguided fluctuations in discourse and behavior—from adopting the strict theses of *al-walā' wa-l-barā'* to practical normalization with the international system—a result of internal and external pressures? Or is what we see today the gradual unveiling of a methodological core compatible with the modern model of the state, which was hidden behind the slogans of Jihād and Tawḥīd until the leadership stabilized and felt secure in its authority? Are we facing a phase-specific slip, or a deliberate methodology that conceals a vision contrary to the Jihādī project from within, and invests in the language of Jihād and the grievances of the mujāhidīn to justify a quiet transition towards a veiled secularism?

These questions are no longer confined to the margins of analytical writings; they have turned into an obsession for many sincere individuals who have experienced the experiment up close and felt that the transformation was not superficial or spontaneous, but deep, systematic, and managed with professional tools that an observer's eye can hardly miss.

Perhaps one of the most prominent things that prompts this serious contemplation is what has been revealed of dangerous facts in recent years about a wide-scale infiltration that has affected the leadership structure of HTS—not at its peripheries, but in the centers of military and security decision-making. It has been proven with evidence (some of it documented by internal confessions) that elements working for regional and international agencies were active in directing some of the sensitive joints of HTS, without any clear statement from the leadership explaining the extent of the infiltration or providing a clear narrative to the Ummah. Instead, silence prevailed, and the truth was left to be preyed upon by speculation, as if the issue did not concern them, or as if they preferred to absorb the spy rather than uproot him!

Similarly, there is the issue of the assassinations that targeted leaders and Shar‘ī scholars in groups opposing al-Jūlānī. Even after the fall of the regime, the pace of assassinations that eliminated senior leaders increased. We can see (with a simplified analytical view) that they were a danger to al-Jūlānī if they saw his misguided deviations that increase day by day. Indeed, a perplexing assassination had previously targeted his companion on the path, (al-Harārī), who was accused in the case of the agents. Some independent figures were certain of the existence of evidence of his collaboration and had presented it to the Sharī‘ah court, but no one paid it any mind. Among those who were certain of his collaboration were al-Zubayr al-Ghazzī and Yaḥyá al-Farghalī. After al-Harārī was released from prison, innocent in the view of the Jūlānī court, a Dā‘ishī entered his guesthouse and blew himself up in it!

No less dangerous is what al-Jūlānī is doing by sending elements of his soldiers to Afghanistan to try to infiltrate the ranks of the al-Qā‘idah organization, incite against its central leadership, and create confusion in the relationship with the Taliban movement. This type of behavior cannot be explained by the logic of "disagreement

in *ijtihād*"; rather, it belongs to the behavior of security regimes that work for the benefit of others more than they work for the benefit of their declared project.

And what of sending delegations of security personnel to Qatar to train in camps and gain experience from them, knowing that Qatar is not a leading country in security studies, but rather it is the American bases and research institutions established in Qatar that graduate the highest levels of agents!

Faced with these scenes, the question of an intention of "secularization" becomes a logical question, not a sarcastic one, and it calls for serious reflection: Was the religiosity that HTS raised in its early days a temporary mobilization cover? Were the Tawhīdī slogans a ladder to popular legitimacy, which it quickly abandoned once the matter was settled? And did the Jihādī creedal discourse that gave people the glad tidings of establishing the dīn ultimately become a means to ensure a political presence, not its goal?

A contemplation of the leadership's speeches from the split with al-Qā'idah until today clearly shows a gradual inclination to replace the discourse of the group with the discourse of the state, and to substitute the project of the Ummah with terms of governance, institutional empowerment, and political flexibility, to the point that the implementation of the Sharī'ah is always postponed indefinitely, linked to international conditions and regional platforms, and sways according to the Turkish and international positions, not according to the Sharī' text.

This fateful question is not limited to analyzing political transformations but extends to the legitimacy of the leadership itself after this vacillation. The Ummah does not hand over its banner to one who treats principles like clothes, changing them according to the seasons! Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Ṭarīfī says: "Those who relapse from the truth and then return to it, their repentance is accepted, and their return is praised, and their past is not gloated over. But they are not given positions of

authority or leadership over the Ummah, nor positions of influence in it. This is because they cannot be trusted not to return to what they were upon. Vacillation is a characteristic of the hypocrites, and it may be due to a lack of sound judgment and reason, all of which harms the Ummah."³³

We do not claim that the man sat in his room from the beginning and planned a complete coup against the dīn, but we also cannot overlook the strange degree of harmony between his movements and the interests of the enemies of the Islamic project. Nor can we turn a blind eye to the meticulous media strategy that re-engineered the Jihādī discourse and made the concepts of creed and Sharī'ah into functional concepts, employed when they serve and frozen when they disturb.

Most dangerous of all is that the Jūlānī transformations were not presented to the Ummah under the umbrella of necessity, but under the wing of a wise political mentality! This means that the crisis is not only in the deviation, but in theorizing for it and exporting it as the salvation from withdrawal and backwardness. When the project reaches this level of justification, deviation becomes a choice, not a necessity, and a strategy, not a temporary way out.

This Sharī'ah warning is not just a passing sermon; it is a decisive ruler by which the Ummah measures the deviation of one who has turned against its foundational principles. Al-Jūlānī, who rode the first wave of Jihād to gain popular legitimacy, forgets that the mujāhidīn are the protectors of the dīn, not tools in a game of interests. If he began his journey under the banner of "Supporting and Liberating al-Shām," and then turned to fight his mujāhidīn brothers and normalize with the enemies of the Ummah, let him know that the good he obtained was through the blessing of their agreement one day, and that the evil that envelops his project today is a natural fruit of his detachment from their *manhaj*. Imām Ibn Ḥazm said: "Know that were it not for the mujāhidīn, the dīn would have perished, and we would have

³³ al-Tafsīr wa-al-Bayān (vol. 3, p. 1546)

been under the protection of the people of kufr. So ponder this, for it is a grave matter."³⁴ What, then, is the fate of one who fought them and handed over their banner to their enemies?! It is not just political treason, but a severing of the artery that supplies the Ummah with life. If Jihād is what preserves the dīn from dissolving in the tyranny of kufr, what is to be expected from a project that stands in the trench of "counter-terrorism" and reproduces the narrative of the West under the cover of a "new phase"?

It is a damning paradox: while al-Jūlānī justifies his transformations with the "wisdom of the phase," Shar'ī history reveals that phases do not justify conceding on foundational principles, and that the "realism" that is being sung about is, in reality, a surrender to the equation of the ṭāghūt. Let him and his followers beware of the "war from Allāh and His Messenger" which is not declared with missiles, but is written in the records of history as shame and disgrace for whoever betrayed the cause he raised as a slogan.

For all these reasons, the question of whether this project was hiding secularism from the beginning is no longer conspiratorial or emotional, but has become a legitimate and methodological question dictated by the facts and supported by the evidence. When resolve is absent in analyzing intentions by comparing them with actions, soft projects infiltrate us, until, when they are complete, we find ourselves under an "Islamic" banner that does not rule by the law of Allāh, does not show enmity to the ṭāghūt, and does not support the mujāhidīn, but rather fights them when they oppose its path.

It is the complete picture of the catastrophe: what al-Jūlānī presents as a new phase is, in reality, a precise implementation of the plan drawn up by the enemies of the Ummah for decades! Shaykh Abū Yaḥyā said: "All these objectives that I have mentioned pour into one direction and aim for a specific goal, which is to besiege the

³⁴ al-Rasā'il (vol. 3, p. 154)

mujāhidīn externally and dismantle them internally, to sow division and disagreement among them, to weaken the resolve in their hearts, to undermine the firm trust that binds them to each other, to besiege their hopes and spread a spirit of frustration and a sense of helplessness, to prepare the ground for the consolidation and construction of the pillars and foundations of the tyrannical state, and to continue in the Jāhilī life so that the enemies of Allāh may then revel in our Ummah as they wish. But *{Indeed, your Lord is in observation.}* [al-Fajr: 14]."³⁵ Thus, the question of "hiding secularism" becomes naive in the face of this reality. The Jūlānī project is no longer a partial deviation; it has transformed into a machine of destruction in the hands of the global system to assassinate the spirit of Jihād and bring the Ummah to its knees under the banner of false realism!

Chapter Five: The Trinity of the Tyrant's Making

A tyrant is not a creature descended from the sky, nor an exceptional being that suddenly emerged from the ashes of war. Rather, he is the complex fruit of a network of wars, interests, and interpreted texts. Every tyrant needs three things: a jurist to legitimize his *manhaj*, institutions to organize his ideas, and soldiers to obey his commands. If these three pillars are established for him, he ascends the throne of tyranny, sits where Pharaoh sat, and speaks what every tyrant before him has spoken: *"O my people, yours is the dominion today, [you being] dominant in the land. But who would protect us from the punishment of Allāh if it were to come to us?"* Pharaoh said, *"I do not show you except what I see, and I do not guide you except to the way of right conduct."* [Ghāfir: 29]. Savagery is not his primary substance, as some people think. Rather, modern administrative rationality is capable of producing

³⁵ al-A' māl al-Kāmilah; Tabdīd li-Abāṭīl Wathīqat al-Tarshīd (vol. 1, p. 592)

organized massacres with obedient hands that do not see themselves as partners in the crime, but as implementers of the system.

The truth is that the most dangerous tyranny is that which wears the cloak of the Sharīʿah, speaks with the tongue of the dīn, and raises the banner of Jihād, while in secret, it holds councils to formulate a man-made constitution, draws up policies to exclude the committed, and manages the country with a bureaucratic mind imported from previous nationalist republican experiences—but with a beard and a turban, and selected hadiths that are made to speak in support of the ruler and pass his orders, not to restrict him by them or hold him accountable for them.

Here we are in this chapter, before a unique experience of its kind, thrilling in its chapters, and earth-shattering in its results: the experience of the bearded version of the Arab tyrant. Al-Jūlānī's project was not limited to just changing the *manhaj*; he reformulated the entire Jihādī system, transforming it from a call to implement the Sharīʿah and break Western hegemony into a project of a citizen-state, a unifying Syrian identity, an open civil government, and dialogue with international powers to establish stability and fight terrorism. So what happened? How did al-Jūlānī transform from the amīr of "Jabhat al-Nuṣrah," who boasted of his pledge of allegiance to al-Qāʿidah, described Arab governments as the ṭawāghīt of the age, and declared his intention to liberate Bayt al-Maqdis, into a civilian president who calls for development and investment, prosecutes those who describe governments as tyrannical, and becomes intolerant of anyone who reminds him of the hadith, "*I was sent with the sword until Allāh alone is worshipped*"?

An analysis of the trinity of the tyrant's making is the best answer to analyze the structure of his group:

1. **The Fatwá:** How did it transition from a position of monitoring the ruler to a tool in his hand? How did yesterday's jurists, who used to sing the praises of

the *fatāwā* of Jihād and disassociation, now legitimize resorting to the constitution, participating in power, normalizing with the West, and fighting those they call extremists?

2. **The Organization:** How did the organizational structure evolve to become a pliant tool in the hands of the president, dividing labor, codifying submission, and reproducing the authoritarian system in the contemporary administrative manner? How did the organization come to stifle any initiative of a truly revolutionary or religious character?
3. **The Command:** How is power managed from top to bottom through a series of Sharīʿ decisions? How is a person stripped of his free self to become an executing machine, hiding behind the phrase "I am but a servant under orders," even if the order contradicts what he was raised upon or dedicated his life to?

And after this trinity comes the most dangerous stage: the separation of religion from the state—not by declaring it as Atatürk or Bourguiba did, but through soft means, under the banner of "the Sharīʿah is the frame of reference," but without actual implementation, no talk of *hudūd*, no laws based on *fiqh*, and not even a mention of the terms of *al-walāʾ wa-l-barāʾ*. Rather, the discourse of the Islamic Ummah has completely disappeared and been replaced with terms like "the Syrian homeland," "national identity," and "one people." The political and cultural scene has even been reshaped on this basis, in an attempt to elevate the experience internally and externally, and to erase what remains of the traces of the global Jihād project to which "the Front" once proudly belonged.

The Fatwá: Signing on Behalf of Allāh to Entrench the Tyrant's Power

At the moment of the great separation between knowledge and power, the people of truth throughout history stood carrying the banner of the fatwá—not as a signature on behalf of the ruler, but as a signature on behalf of the Lord of the worlds. The key phrase in their political and jurisprudential consciousness was: "If the ruler violates the law of Allāh, he is neither to be heard nor obeyed."

Today, however, under the model of al-Jūlānī and his new project, this equation has been inverted. The name of Allāh is now invoked to justify the overthrow of the Sharīʿah, the text is truncated to codify the betrayal of the text, and the jurists are summoned to place their seals at the head of his project. The fatwá was, from the beginning, a fundamental pillar in the structure of Jūlānī's hegemony, serving as a machine for interpreting and spinning the text to suit the political changes of the leader. This function began the day the Sharʿī apparatus was appointed to act as an impenetrable dam against any jurisprudential reasoning outside the institution of prostration. The voice of independent scholars soon receded, and the fatwá issued in the name of HTS no longer spoke the ruling of Allāh, but the ruling of the ruler's interest, claiming it was the ruling of Allāh by relying on their innovated "higher objectives" which they clothed in the garb of the Sharīʿah.

At the beginning of the project, the tone of the discourse was replete with slogans of implementing the Sharīʿah, establishing the dīn, and blocking the path of the "Ikhwān's" experiments. Al-Jūlānī repeatedly declared that the blood of the martyrs would not be spent except in a project of an Islamic khilāfah. They attacked Mohamed Morsi for insisting on a democratic constitution and accused him of veiled secularism. Erdoğan himself was described as a "ṭāghūt who rules by the constitution," and the *fatāwā* at that time stated: it is not permissible to resort to man-made laws, and anyone who beautifies the image of a political ṭāghūt is a hypocrite. Then came the partial liberation, and with it, a change of context, and

with that, a change in the fatwá. Erdoğan became a moderate Muslim ally, international charters were read from the Friday pulpits, silence about the Shar‘ī *ḥudūd* became wisdom, and the statements of the Shar‘ī institution turned into public relations bulletins that portrayed al-Jūlānī as a statesman and justified every compromising step with the title of "*maṣāliḥ mursalah*" (unrestricted public interests). Where were these interests before empowerment? And why was mentioning them then considered hypocrisy? Only the fatwá knows the answer, because in this project, it is not extracted from the principles of the Sharī‘ah, but from the whims of the palace.

Today, in this "nascent" project, we no longer hear the concepts upon which the group was once founded. No one speaks anymore about implementing the Sharī‘ah, defensive Jihād, the banner of Tawḥīd, the punishment for apostasy, or disavowal from allying with the Cross and from the internal and external disbeliever. The fatwá has been reduced to fragmented issues, vague rulings, weak expressions, and a Shar‘ī cover for ready-made political decisions. If the palace decides to open the door to negotiations with the West, a fatwá comes down saying: "There is no harm in international dealings as long as it is in the interest of the Muslims." If the presidency decides to issue a pardon for a group of former officers, a fatwá comes down saying: "Go, for you are the freed ones." If a media campaign is launched against the mujāhidīn abroad, it is said: "These are Khawārij who have harmed the project." But if a group of sincere people rebels, or a shaykh who has remained on the covenant writes a post criticizing this path, the Shar‘ī institution issues an urgent statement accusing him of "dividing the ranks," "spreading fear," and perhaps "treason and connection to foreign agendas." And if he persists, he is imprisoned, and a fabricated security charge of "threatening national security" is placed upon his head.

The matter is no longer confined to statements but has been practically embodied in the production of a new class of "official muftīs" akin to the religious figures in Arab states: they memorize expressions of piety, master moderate phrases, and display religiosity in their appearance, but they are detached from the project of the Ummah and attached to the project of the state. So much so that if you were to collect their sermons and *fatāwā*, you would not come out with a single principled stance against the ṭāghūt, because they were created to be a tongue for him, not a monitor over him.

Al-Jūḷānī has succeeded in transforming the fatwá from a weapon of resistance into a machine of servitude, and from a pickaxe for demolishing tyranny into a brick in its structure. The Sharī scholar has become an employee within the bureaucracy of power, tasked with one mission: to trim the Sharī'ah so it does not tarnish the president's image, to amputate sharp concepts so they do not shock the allies, and to present a version of the dīn devoid of any revolutionary, creedal, or mobilizing content, contenting itself with the "fiqh of reality"—where the reality is al-Jūḷānī, and the fiqh is what the palace allows.

When the fatwá is detached from the Sharī'ah and tied to political power, it becomes more dangerous than the despot's rifle. The rifle kills the body, but the false fatwá kills the soul, obscures the compass, anesthetizes the Ummah, and turns it into a nation of slaves who always say: "Our shaykhs have given us a fatwá for that." The truth is that evil jurists do not only create tyrants; they preserve the system of tyranny. It is reproduced in the minds of generations, the fiqh of Jihād is buried in the books of heritage, the meanings of loyalty are drowned in the books of creed, and the banners of the call to Allāh are folded until further notice—a notice that does not come from the heavens, but from the top of the governmental pyramid, when it deems the circumstances suitable to reopen this file for investment, not for worship.

The Organization: Dividing Functional Labor

While the tyrant in his explicit, old form would sit alone upon the chests of the people, commanding and forbidding, and stamping the face of his authority with the marks of singularity and despotism, today's tyrant is more complex and cunning than that. The ruler is no longer an individual governing the people from his tower; he has become an organization armed with structures and hierarchies, committees and councils, institutions and decrees. Orders are delivered with names that do not shock the collective sense of the mujāhidīn but rather suggest to them steadfastness and remaining on the covenant, and so the new face of tyranny deceives them.

Al-Jūlānī did not ascend to the throne of power so suddenly; the path was paved for him by a meticulously constructed, flexible, and multi-functional organization, whose purpose is to divide the work of authority among dozens of hands and minds, so that it is not known with precision who made the decision, who gave the order, who issued the fatwá, and who implemented it.

Thus, sin is absolved from consciences, the knots of accountability are untied, and the state becomes a huge, faceless machine about which it is always said: "The system decided," "The institution implemented," "The committee saw fit," "The leadership directed." Then no one is held accountable, no one is questioned, and no one is reviewed. Here, the modern bureaucratic structure is repeated, where a collective crime is not carried out by bloody orders, but by organizational memos and administrative chains of execution in which the perpetrator does not appear, despite the falling of victims.

In this organization, the ruler, despite his individuality in decision-making, has become hidden behind the Shūrā Council, the General Authority, the Syrian Government, the security forces, the unified judiciary, and other functional names that dismantle the solid structure of individual tyranny and reshape it into a

network form, in which the tyrant becomes fortified by a system, and responsibility is distributed among distant circles, so the people do not see the serpent's head even if they perish from its venom. Herein lies the brilliance of the Jūlānī project: he transferred the form of power from the image of the shaykh-amīr to the image of ruling institutions, while its despotic, authoritarian essence remained as it was, perhaps even more so. For each of these institutions, despite its official character, has no control over its own affairs. It lives on the rhythm of the supreme security authority that directs it wherever it wishes, dismantles it when it wishes, and reshapes it if the political orientation requires it, without anyone daring to say: "This is a decision of despotism, not a decision of shūrā."

This organization, with its structure and ramifications, produces a state of compound servitude. Every small employee in it becomes a cog in the machine of tyranny, every soldier an executor under orders, and every official a link that passes on the decision and then denies his moral responsibility for it. Thus, the slaves become content with their servitude, because they do not see themselves as partners in blood or accomplices in injustice, but as employees performing administrative roles, officials implementing regulations, and members abiding by the rules of the institution. So if the day comes when one of them is asked, "How was so-and-so imprisoned?" he says, "I am not on the judicial committee." If he is asked, "Why was that group besieged?" he says, "This is a security decision." If he is asked, "Why was normalization with the West legitimized?" he says, "This is within the jurisdiction of the political office." And if he is asked, "And you, what do you say?" he replies, "I am but a servant under orders." This is the phrase that encapsulates the philosophy of the tyrannical organization in the Jūlānī project: "I am but a servant under orders." With this tongue, the soldiers speak when they kill, the Sharʿī scholars when they justify, the employees when they betray, and the notables when they remain silent. When all of these come together in one system, the tyrannical

regime is complete: the executioner's face is not known, and the location of the sword is not seen, but the victim bleeds to death.

The Command: When Obedience Is Imposed

The fatwá legitimizes the choices, and the organization divides the labor, but tyranny's structure is not completed until it is accompanied by an authority that commands, directs, intimidates, and demands obedience without question, and throws the action onto the shoulders of the soldiers at the bottom of the pyramid to absolve those at the top. Here, we have entered the closed square of political despotism cloaked in a counterfeit Islamic Sharīʿah: the "trinity of the tyrant's making" in its perfect engineering. When the administrative-military-political system (falsely labeled as Jihādī or Islamic) becomes a ladder of blind obedience, where the source of the decision is not questioned, and the file of accountability for justice is not opened, we are facing a modern version of Pharaoh's statement: *{I do not show you except what I see, and I do not guide you except to the way of right conduct.}* [Ghāfir: 29].

Coercive regimes understood early on that an ordinary person is not born a tyrant but is made in the image of the system and shaped to the measure of the institution. Therefore, obedience today is no longer a moral choice or a religious commitment as they claim; it has become a functional duty, for the neglect of which an employee is held accountable in this world just as one is held accountable for neglecting prayer in the hereafter. If you want to see slaves boasting of their chains, look at the district amīrs, the branch leaders, and the office managers—how they sanctify the administrative hierarchy and refer every question about injustice to a phrase immortalized in the records of tyrants: "I am but a servant under orders."

There is no doubt that the trinity of tyranny reached its perfection in the era of al-Jūlānī when the Sharīʿ concept of responsibility was replaced with the

bureaucratic concept of implementation. There is no moral or Sharʿī responsibility in the soldier's mind, but an administrative decision that must be obeyed. If the order comes to strike a protester, arrest a mujāhid, or torture a shaykh, he implements it without question, then returns to say, "The order came from above." He does not know that the "order is from below"—from beneath Jāhiliyyah, and from beneath the global system, not from above revelation or above the Sharīʿah. Exactly as Zygmunt Bauman showed in his analysis of the behavior of the Holocaust executioners, who were neither hateful nor savage, but merely tools of execution within a systematic network that does not ask about the morality of the act, but only about its effectiveness.

Al-Jūlānī, having now become the absolute ruler of Syria, no longer needs to issue declared instructions or give sermons that command or forbid; that era has passed. He now operates by directing the general situation, controlling the intentions of statements and the direction of the political process, so his employees understand where they should lean, when to be angry, and when to be peaceful. This atmosphere, laden with hints, suggestions, and interpretations, is the deadliest of despotism's tools, because it deprives society of the ability to identify the decision-maker, the accountant, the killer. And when principles are slaughtered with an unknown knife, no one demands blood.

How similar today is to yesterday, when coercive armies would besiege cities, displace villages, and arrest the innocent, and then you would find no signature on the paper, no fingerprint on the decision, but a committee, a council, a directive, and an administrative procedure. Then the complainant is told, "The matter is not in our hands." He does not know that this is the very system that was built for the tyrant's hegemony without his face showing. When the Sharʿī scholar in this system is asked, "Is this permissible?" he says, "The higher objectives of the Sharīʿah obligate it upon us." And if he is told, "Is the command upon Allāh or upon the organization?" he says,

"There is no contradiction between obedience and piety." So the Sharī scholar became an arm of the command and a muftī for obedience, and his word became a mount for decisions whose details he does not know, and over which he has no right to object. Rather, he must justify, reconcile, and patch up.

This is an advanced stage of tyranny: the tyrant produces a discourse that removes him from the circle of sin without removing his tools from the circle of crime. The truth is that the Jūlānī despotism—having taken Islam as a cover—does not need the executioner's whip. A written order in bureaucratic language is sufficient for him, which passes through Islamized directorates and ends with an obedient recruit. When the recruit is asked, "How did you carry it out?" he says, "The order reached me from the office." When the office is asked, "Who ordered it?" it says, "It was carried out according to general policy." When the general policy is asked, "Who established it?" it is said, "The Shūrā chose it." And when the Shūrā is asked, "Why did you choose it?" it is said, "It is derived from the Sharīʿah and then the people"—for acts of worship are linked to the Sharīʿah, even with misleading distortions, and worldly rulings are based on the people (even if not all the people or most of them).

Thus, obedience is completed without an apparent tyrant, the crime is committed without a registered criminal, and the creed is crushed without anyone speaking in its name. Therefore, al-Jūlānī did not need to reinvent tyranny; he only rearranged it, put a turban on it, gave it an official seal, and then spread it in the form of branches, offices, councils, and authorities. In reality, they are but tools of a single command: that the people remain in the station of slaves—not asking, not objecting, and not thinking.

Chapter Six: The Hijacking of Objectives

There is no gate among the gates of the dīn that does not have a share of the heart's action; even politics, in our Sharī scale, is an act of worship, through which one draws closer to Allāh the Exalted, and in which sincerity and intention are required, just as they are required in the prostration of prayer and the fasting of the day. The corruption of this intention and the deception of Satan in it is one of the greatest gates of relapse at the moments of victory and empowerment, as the striving to establish the dīn is replaced by a striving to appease reality, and victory for the Sharī'ah becomes a slogan to be interpreted, not a methodology to be implemented. Politics, in the scale of the Sharī'ah, is not a "mechanical" management of the state's blessings, nor a purely human art of managing interests. It is—before and after that—a gate among the gates of worship, taking the place of intention in prayer, piety in trade, truthfulness in Jihād, and sincerity in leadership.

The principles of the Sharī'ah and an inductive reading of its evidences have indicated this. The Sharī'ah has ruled the shepherd to be a traitor if he is not sincere³⁶, the ruler to be disavowed if he seeks leadership for worldly gain, and the one in charge of the group's affairs to be a shepherd, not a lord, and a worker, not an owner.³⁷ Allāh the Exalted has made ruling between people a trust, saying: *{Indeed, Allāh commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice. Excellent is that which Allāh instructs you. Indeed, Allāh is ever Hearing and Seeing.}* [al-Nisā': 58].

Political action is inseparable from two great principles: trustworthiness and justice. Both are acts of worship before they are acts of politics. Indeed, their realization in

³⁶ On the authority of Ma'qil ibn Yasār who said: I heard the Prophet ﷺ say: "There is no servant whom Allah entrusts with a flock and he does not surround them with his sincere advice, except that he will not find the fragrance of Paradise." Al-Bukhārī (7150), and Muslim (142).

³⁷ On the authority of 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Samurah who said: The Prophet ﷺ said to me: "O 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Samurah, do not ask for leadership, for if you are given it after asking for it, you will be entrusted to it, but if you are given it without asking for it, you will be helped in it." Al-Bukhārī (6622)..

the Sharī‘ah is inconceivable except with a correct intention, a worshipful purpose, and fear of Allāh, not of the public or the international community. The great scholar Ibn al-Qayyim said: "And this is ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, may Allāh be pleased with him, upon whom thoughts would crowd regarding what pleases the Lord, the Exalted. He might employ them in his prayer, so he would be preparing his army while he was in prayer, thus combining Jihād and prayer. This is from the chapter of the intertwining of acts of worship within a single act of worship, and it is from a precious and noble chapter, which only a sincere, astute seeker, well-versed in knowledge, and of high aspiration can enter, such that he enters into one act of worship and achieves therein various acts of worship. And that is the grace of Allāh; He gives it to whom He wills."³⁸

Politics that is practiced without the oversight of worship becomes an idol, worshipped by minds, to which statements prostrate, and for which the dīn and the creed are sacrificed in the name of reality and interest. Among the most wondrous things with which the people of da‘wah and Jihād have been afflicted is that when some of them approached power or gained a position in the administration, they forgot that it is an act of worship and thought it was an honorary position. They looked at interests with the eye of a bargainer, not with the eye of the Sharī‘ah, and interpreted the texts as if they were writing for a talk show, not for their Day of Resurrection. Imām ‘Izz al-Dīn ibn ‘Abd al-Salām said: "What the ignorant invalidators call politics is the commission of evils that outweigh the benefits, or the abandonment of benefits that outweigh the evils. In the licensing of taxes, alcohol, and fornication, there are outweighed benefits submerged in the evils of this world and the hereafter. *{O you who have believed, respond to Allāh and to the Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life. And know that Allāh comes between a man and his heart and that to Him you will be gathered.}* [al-Anfāl: 24]. It is with the like of this that the wretched govern themselves, by preferring overriding evils over

³⁸ al-Dā‘ wa-al-Dawā‘ (p. 158)

benefits to satisfy the fleeting pleasures of joy, and they abandon overriding benefits for base pleasures or lowly joys, and they do not care about the immediate or delayed evils that result from them. This is like drinking wine and intoxicating beverages for the pleasure of their ecstasy, and fornication, sodomy, forbidden harm to enemies, killing those who anger them, insulting those who enrage them, usurping wealth, arrogance, and tyranny. Likewise, they flee from immediate pains and sorrows that we have been commanded to endure, because of the immediate and delayed benefits in enduring them, and they do not care what they commit themselves to in terms of enduring the greater of two evils to obtain the lesser of two pleasures. Likewise, they abandon the greater of two benefits to obtain the lesser of two pleasures. Pleasures and desires have intoxicated them, so they have forgotten death and the calamities that follow it. So woe to him who abandons the governance of the Most Merciful and follows the governance of Satan, and commits immorality and disobedience. Those are the people of transgression and misguidance."³⁹

If the greatest objective of politics in Islam is to establish the dīn and govern the world by it, as Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah stated: "The obligatory purpose of positions of authority is the reformation of the people's dīn, which if they lose, they have lost a clear loss, and whatever they enjoyed in this world will not benefit them; and the reformation of what the dīn cannot be established without from the affairs of their world. This is of two types: the division of wealth among its rightful recipients, and the punishment of transgressors. So whoever does not transgress, his dīn and his world are reformed for him,"⁴⁰ then the first thing by which politics in Islam is measured is the intention and purpose of its practitioner. If it is sound, the action is sound by it, and if it is corrupt, all the interpretations built upon it are corrupt, even if the eloquent adorn them and the people of the project believe them.

³⁹ al-Qawā'id al-Kubrā (vol. 1, p. 89)

⁴⁰ Majmū' al-Fatāwā (vol. 28, p. 262)

Sufyān al-Thawrī said: "I have not treated anything more difficult for me than my intention, for it keeps changing upon me."⁴¹ What then do you think of one who delves into the depths of politics, governs people, makes decisions, and draws up relationships? Can he be infallible from the corruption of intention while he buys and sells with the greatest thing that has descended from the heavens: "the dīn of Allāh, His rule, and His command"? There is no misguidance that has occurred in this domain except that its beginning was a flaw in the heart: seeking empowerment, not Tawhīd; or glorifying the throne, not revelation; or seeking victory for the self, not for the truth; or appeasing the people without observing Allāh.

Let it be known, then, that the first thing required of one who steps forward for political work in the name of Islam is to hold his heart to account, to examine his purpose, and to fear being among *{those whose effort is lost in worldly life, while they think that they are doing well in work.}* [al-Kahf: 104].

Some contemporary Islamic movements have been afflicted with the fitnah of cold, objective-based reasoning—that which is invoked when there is a desire to patch things up and is absent when it is obligatory to be explicit. The gates of fitnah have not been opened in the Ummah except after its people have cast off the yoke of the text from their necks, adorned themselves in the garb of "higher objectives," and entered through its doors, claiming to be reformers, while they change the positions of the words, break the rules of interpretation in the name of public interest, and clothe misguidance in the garments of piety, until the one who makes concessions becomes, in their view, a "realistic jurist/politician," and the one who is steadfast becomes a "reckless confrontationist." These people did not know—or knew and feigned ignorance—that higher objectives are not a wide-open door for justification, but a precise scale for determination, and that every objective that is not based on a

⁴¹ al-Jāmi‘ li-Akhḥāq al-Rāwī wa-Ādāb al-Sāmi‘ (vol. 1, p. 317)

text, not built upon inductive reasoning, and not preserved within the universals of the Sharī‘ah is a potential source of fitnah, not a path to salvation.

Satan has tempted many of the distorters with this fitnah, as he came to them not with the tongue of sin, but with the tongue of the Sharī‘ah: "Do it for the sake of public interest, take reality into account, preserve the entity." Then he continues to spin distortions for them until they move from postponing the ruling to suspending it, from gradual implementation to abolishing it, and from being gentle in the da‘wah to conceding on the creed, and behold, they have replaced the Sharī‘ah with a man-made law, loyalty with a national discourse, and enmity towards the dīn with an outward good intention.

If you denounce them and say, "Where is the text? And where is the ruling of Allāh?" they say, "The higher objectives, the public interest, the necessities..." If you ask them about the regulations for these, they fall silent, or they accuse you of extremism and narrow-mindedness, and they cast the texts behind their backs. Here, the greatest form of fitnah is manifested: that evil is carried in the name of the Sharī‘ah, deviation is justified in the name of purpose, and Jāhiliyyah is clothed in the garb of universal objectives, until the people are left with no definitive Sharī‘ah, but with hollow objectives that are shaped in the image of the ruler, the interest of the group, or the fluctuations of the political climate.

Not every imagined interest can be relied upon in deriving rulings. It must be based on a valid Shar‘ī principle. Higher objectives are not an excuse to bypass the text, but a control for understanding and applying it. Whoever makes them an alternative to the text has been tempted by them, has deceived himself, and is among those about whom Allāh said: *{Then is he to whom the evil of his deed has been made attractive so he considers it good [like one rightly guided]? For indeed, Allāh sends astray whom He wills and guides whom He wills. So do not let yourself perish over them in regret. Indeed, Allāh is Knowing of what they do.}* [Fāṭir: 8]. Imām ‘Izz al-Dīn ibn ‘Abd

al-Salām said: "All happiness lies in following the Qur'ān and adhering to the Sharī'ah of Islam and the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ. Whoever opposes that has distanced himself from Allāh to the extent of his opposition. So let him who wishes do less, and let him who wishes do more. The deluded one will soon know, when the dust settles, whether he is riding a horse or a donkey. The example of these people in this era is like the example of the hypocrites at the beginning of Islam."⁴²

It is from the ongoing sunan of Allāh in His creation that guidance is given as a trial for people or a test, not as an absolute preference or a final testimony. Allāh said in the context of differentiating between the people of steadfastness and the people of deviation: *{And if We had not strengthened you, you would have almost inclined to them a little.}* [al-Isrā': 74]. Steadfastness is a divine granting of success, being grateful for it is an obligation, and staying within its limits is a duty. Whoever transgresses from the station of trial to the station of contentment has been deceived by what he was given, and Satan has deluded him with the blessing of steadfastness until it became a gateway to error in another matter.

We have seen in our reality those whom Allāh has protected—by His grace—from the fitnah of treading the path of secularism, yet they did not thank Him for this protection by following the straight path or by attributing the grace to the Giver of Grace. Instead, they delved into the fitnah of patching up and justification under the pretext of public interest and higher objectives. This shows that the fitnah may not be in the action, but in the word, in the silence, or in the statement that is sought for the sake of Allāh but is presented for the sake of the people and the ruler. From Muḥammad ibn Bundār al-Sabbāk al-Jurjānī: I said to Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal: "It is very hard for me to say: so-and-so is weak, so-and-so is a liar." Aḥmad said: "If you remain silent and I remain silent, then when will the ignorant person know the authentic from the weak?" This is in the matter of narration, so what about the suspension of

⁴² al-Qawā'id al-Kubrā (vol. 2, p. 113)

the Sharī‘ah and the betrayal of thousands of martyrs? And what about one who speaks to beautify falsehood and nullify the truth, in the name of higher objectives and universals, without returning to the principles of the Sharī‘ah or its definitive texts? Indeed, it is established in the domain of higher objectives that an interest is only considered an interest if it conforms to a Sharī‘ah text or principle and serves the ruling, not alters it. Whoever makes it an alternative principle and disputes the Sharī‘ah with it has obeyed his desires, even if he adorns himself with the tongue of the scholars.

Let it be known, then, that whoever Allāh protects from a fitnah, and then does not thank Allāh by renewing his piety and adhering to the text, may have been given a greater fitnah, which is the fitnah in justification, deception in the name of religion, and speaking about the Sharī‘ah without knowledge or a scale. His end will be more severe than that of one who erred at the beginning, because he misleads others and deceives the people in the name of knowledge and piety.

If it is established that politics is an act of worship, that higher objectives are controls, not exits, and that fitnah may be cloaked in the garment of public interest, then one of the greatest things that must be clarified in this domain is the correct methodology for considering higher objectives and refuting the deviant justifications derived from them. This is because the people who today legitimize political deviation and creedal concessions do not openly advocate for the separation of religion and state, nor do they explicitly state their suspension of the Sharī‘ah. Instead, they take the path of "higher objectives and public interests" and build their positions on justifications that outwardly appear to adhere to the universals of the Sharī‘ah, but inwardly are an abrogation of its definitive principles and a suspension of its pillars in the name of gradualism, necessity, or Sharī‘ah politics.

Herein, responding to them is not merely through political debate or rhetorical confrontation, but by deconstructing the *manhaj* upon which their specious

arguments are built, and weighing their justifications against the scale of the principles of Sharī‘ah and the rules of *maqāṣid* (higher objectives) as established by the imāms of knowledge, not as they have been reduced by the employees of offices and da‘wah institutions. In this chapter, we will present the most prominent of these specious arguments, not to refute them with the well-known refutations that these very same people used to circulate (though the matter will not be devoid of them), but in an attempt to understand and analyze the phenomenon to derive what can be learned from it. Each justification will be presented against the principles of *maqāṣid* themselves, so it may be known who has championed the *maqāṣid* and who has hijacked them, who was keen on preserving the dīn and who offered it as a sacrifice on the altar of interest. We hope in Allāh that this chapter will be a deterrent to whoever has been deceived by the glitter of *maqāṣid* and has thus uttered his falsehood through them, and a reminder to whoever has been confused, or was drawn in a moment of political turmoil and whose soul persuaded him to remain silent about the suspension of the Sharī‘ah in the name of universals and outcomes.

Section One: The Devastating Suspension of the Sharī‘ah in the Name of Maqāṣid

The greatest thing that distinguishes the divine dīn from man-made projects is its frame of reference, and that the truth is not taken from the people, no matter how numerous, nor from reality, no matter how pressing, but from the preserved revelation, the sent-down law, and the infallible text.

Therefore, the matter of ruling and seeking judgment by the law of Allāh is not a matter of conjectural politics, nor a station of changing balances, but a firm pillar in the faith of the Ummah, a title for the sovereignty of the Sharī‘ah, and a crossroads between the people of Islam and the people of Jāhiliyyah. But the people in the project of the "modern state" that adorns itself with the garb of the Sharī‘ah have

not ceased to postpone this matter from its proper place and to open upon it the doors of *maqāṣid*-based interpretations, until ruling by the Sharīʿah has become postponed, restricted, or contingent upon gradualism, ability, and international balances. Then this misguidance was promoted in statements, interviews, and "foundational/distortive" programs, whose outward appearance is the Sharīʿah, but whose inner reality is the abrogation of a principle from the principles of the dīn.

The implementation of the Sharīʿah was first hijacked, not by way of denial, but by way of claiming to provide a principled foundation, and under the banner of the fiqh of *maqāṣid*. It was claimed that gradualism is a principle, that inability is a reason for exoneration, and that opportune timing is preferable to open confrontation. Then the matter evolved until remaining silent about Jāhilī rule became a type of political piety, participation in the administrative ṭāghūt a daʿwah necessity, and beautifying man-made laws a matter of wisdom and public interest. This very thing is the devastating blow of this chapter: that the Sharīʿah is hung on the shelf of *maqāṣid*, and the rulings of Allāh are suspended at the gates of politics, and then it is claimed that this is from the "fiqh of reality," not from the suspension of the Sharīʿah.

There is no doubt that understanding public interest must be linked to the true objectives of the Sharīʿah, not to what suits desires or narrow worldly interests. Ḥujjat al-Islām [al-Ghazālī] said: "As for public interest (*maṣlaḥah*), it is an expression that originally means bringing a benefit or repelling a harm, but we do not mean that by it. For bringing benefit and repelling harm are the objectives of creation, and the well-being of creation lies in achieving their objectives. But what we mean by public interest is the preservation of the objective of the Sharīʿah, and the objective of the Sharīʿah for creation is fivefold: to preserve for them their dīn, their selves, their intellects, their lineage, and their wealth. So everything that includes the preservation of these five fundamentals is a public interest, and everything that causes these fundamentals to be lost is a corruption, and repelling it

is a public interest."⁴³ Imām al-Shāṭibī said: "The interests and objectives of the Hereafter are given precedence in consideration over the interests and objectives of this world, by agreement, as it is not correct to consider a worldly interest that undermines the interests of the Hereafter."⁴⁴ Ponder how the public interest here is restricted by its preservation of the fundamentals of the Sharīʿah. How, then, can it be said that suspending the *ḥudūd* and obstructing the establishment of the Sharīʿah, or being lenient in it, is a matter of public interest? This is a blatant deviation in the concept of public interest and its monopolization by the materialistic mind, not the wise Sharīʿah.

The Sharīʿ commands contain the objectives, so compliance with the commands is the realization of the Sharīʿ interests that lead to the objectives, as al-Abyārī said: "An inductive study of the Sharīʿah guides us to the fact that the rulings were only established in connection with interests, but they may be apparent to the observers, or they may be hidden, and Allāh the Exalted reserves the knowledge of that for Himself."⁴⁵ So, uncovering the objectives is not for the purpose of deviating from the commands, but for understanding the Sharīʿ command according to the intent of the Lawgiver. The interests of the commands are not apparent to everyone; some are apparent to every observer, others to the elite, and some are not apparent to anyone, while believing in the existence of the interest, which is known as "*taʿabbud*" (pure worship). Shaykh al-Islām said: "For the realization of the influential attributes in the rulings in their true form and the knowledge of the ruling and the meanings that the Sharīʿah contains are among the noblest of sciences. Some of it is clear, which many people know, and some of it is subtle, which only their elite know."⁴⁶

One of the greatest and most dangerous errors is to give precedence to the intellect over the Sharīʿ text in determining the limits, and to assume that transgressing a

⁴³ al-Mustaṣfā (p. 174)

⁴⁴ al-Muwāfaqāt (vol. 3, p. 387)

⁴⁵ Tabṣīrat al-Ḥukkām (vol. 2, p. 38)

⁴⁶ Majmūʿ al-Fatāwā (vol. 20, p. 567)

single one of the Sharī‘ah's limits is permissible under political, social, or even rational justifications, ignoring that these limits are not ink on paper that can be chosen according to mood, but are restrictions stipulated by the Sharī‘ah with great care to preserve the dīn, the self, the intellect, the lineage, and the wealth. Imām al-Shāṭibī said: "The meaning of the Sharī‘ah is that it sets limits for the legally responsible individuals in their actions, words, and beliefs, and this is the sum of what it contains. If it is permissible for the intellect to transgress a single limit, it is permissible for it to transgress all the limits, because what is established for a thing is established for its like, and transgressing a single limit is the meaning of its nullification, i.e., this limit is not correct. And if it is permissible to nullify one, it is permissible to nullify the rest."⁴⁷ The great scholar al-Ṭūfī said: *{And when their messengers came to them with clear proofs, they rejoiced in what they had of knowledge, and they were enveloped by what they used to ridicule.}* [Ghāfir: 83], is an indication that no one should oppose the knowledge of the messengers with anything else, for then he is like one who opposes the medicine of Hippocrates and Galen with the medicine of old women, but even more foolish in mind and weaker in opinion; for the prophets base their knowledge on a direct vision based on divine power and knowledge, whereas this one who opposes it with his knowledge bases it on his intellect and understanding. And where is the weak intellect of man in comparison to the knowledge of the All-Wise, the All-Subtle?"⁴⁸ Thus, it becomes clear that the selective transgression of the Sharī‘ah's limits, whatever the motives, is a path to nullifying the Sharī‘ah in its entirety. The Sharī‘ah is not a collection of rulings from which one can choose, but an integrated system that does not accept violation, and it is not permissible for the legally responsible individual to transgress a single one of its limits under the pretext of achieving an interest or repelling a harm.

⁴⁷ al-Muwāfaqāt (vol. 1, p. 131)

⁴⁸ al-Ishārāt al-Ilāhiyyah (p. 554).

Ḥujjat al-Islām mentioned an issue regarding the confusion in building rulings on interests: "Another example: If someone were to say: it is narrated that one of the great scholars entered upon one of the sultans, who asked him about having intercourse during the day in Ramaḍān. He said: 'You must fast for two consecutive months.' When he left, some of the jurists questioned him, saying: 'How can one who is able to free a slave resort to fasting for two months, when fasting is the duty of the poor? This king owns countless slaves.' He replied: 'If I had told him: "You must free a slave," he would have considered it insignificant, freed slaves, and had intercourse repeatedly. Freeing a slave would not deter him, but fasting for two consecutive months would.' What do you say about following such an interest, knowing that the purpose of the expiation is deterrence, and the king is only deterred by fasting, not by freeing a slave?

We say: This, in our view, is a complete departure from the Sharīʿah and a sloughing off of the yoke of the dīn. It leads to the demolition of the foundations of the Sharīʿah, the distortion of its limits and restrictions, and changing them according to persons, times, and circumstances, and the ruling in all of them is to oppose the text based on what is deemed beneficial. This is something that is definitively false. This is what we meant when we said that following interests that contradict the text is false, and this is of that kind. Rulings are sought from interests that are similar to the interests of the Sharīʿah when we lack a specific text from the Sharīʿah on the ruling. But when we find it, considerations of benefit and the inclinations of the mind are set aside in the presence of the texts. When the Lawgiver has stipulated a matter, it must be observed. If the text is missing, we look for an indication of the reason for the stipulated ruling and establish the ruling by it. If we are unable to do so, we look for interests that resemble the type of interests of the Sharīʿah.

As for what this muftī imagined—of deterrence—it is corrupt. The way to deter such a person is to explain to him that expiations do not erase sins. If the dust of the earth were to turn into gold and he were to spend it, it would not equal his crime of

violating the sanctity of the sanctified month of Allāh the Exalted, and so on, by explaining the wrath of Allāh the Exalted and His blame that he exposes himself to. If we were to go about lying to the owned based on what we deem beneficial, in hopes of treating them, we would have confused the Sharī‘ah, and we would not be confident in achieving success with them. It would reach their ears that the scholars of the Sharī‘ah distort the *fatāwā* for their sake, and trust in their words would be lost. So it is necessary to preserve the limits of the Sharī‘ah and turn away from interests, for a fatwá based on interest is *ijtihād*. And Mu‘ādh, may Allāh be pleased with him, said: 'I will judge by the Book of Allāh, then by the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, and if I do not find it, I will exercise my own judgment.' So how can the texts be contradicted by *ijtihādāt*? This is an example of an interest that contradicts the text."⁴⁹

The truth is that those who interpret the suspension of the Sharī‘ah necessitate more than that. The reality of their statement and its outcome is the same as the statement of the pure secularists, some of whom state that the Shar‘ī *ḥudūd* were a deterrent in a bygone era, but now the interest of deterrence is not achieved by implementing the *ḥudūd*.⁵⁰ This judgment, which some heretics have shown, cannot be answered by the Islamists who suspend the Sharī‘ah, because their starting point is one and the same: the realization of the Shar‘ī interests that they see, not those that the Lawgiver has determined in the contents of His rulings written in the revelation.

Here, we are not discussing the self-proclaimed secularists who call for the separation of religion from governance; their case is clear. We are addressing those who wear the garb of Jihād, speak the language of *maqāṣid*, and deceive the people of

⁴⁹ Shifā‘ al-Ghalīl (p. 219)

⁵⁰ The general refutation of this shubhah (doubt/specious argument) is that the benefit of deterrence is not the basis for the obligation of the ruling to establish the ḥadd (prescribed punishment), nor is it the most important of the benefits, but rather the most important benefit is the manifestation of the landmarks of the Sharī‘ah. This is in addition to the fact that the rule that prevents the dropping of rulings based on imagined purposes applies to all or most forms of partial and total suspension of the Sharī‘ah.

the *manhaj*, while they suspend the rulings of Allāh step by step, and distortion after distortion, until hardly anything of the Sharī‘ah remains in the rule of the state except a camouflaged discourse, superficial titles, and councils whose outward appearance is shūrā but whose inner reality is tyranny.

In this section, we will present three parts, representing the mother of the foundational specious arguments by which the Sharī‘ah has been suspended in the name of *maqāṣid*, along with an explanation of the flaw in understanding the Sharī‘ah:

1. Compound ignorance in the matter of ruling.
2. The specious argument of gradualism in implementing the Sharī‘ah.
3. The specious argument of the absence of ability.

In each of these sections, we will return the argument to its origin, the objective to its control, and politics to its scale, to show that these justifications did not grow except in an environment of concession, were not strengthened except by the weakness of knowledge, and did not become widespread except when the fiqh of interests became a door for escaping from the texts, not for understanding and implementing them.

Pragmatic Renewal Between the Wa‘īdiyyah and the Murji‘ah

If people go astray in understanding *īmān*, they will go astray in the matter of ruling. If the station of the fundamentals versus the branches is disturbed for them, and the differentiation between major kufr and disobedience, they will fall into one of two innovations: extremism or negligence, Wa‘īdī harshness or Murji‘ī apathy.

This is precisely what is witnessed today in the concept of implementing the Sharī‘ah among contemporary Islamic action groups: extremism from those who see delaying or altering some applications as absolute kufr that expels from the religion

in all cases, and negligence from those who have made all the rulings of the Sharīʿah a matter of *ijtihād*, postponement, and concession in the name of *maqāṣid*. Ahl al-Sunnah wa-l-Jamāʿah have established that *īmān* is speech, action, and belief; it increases with obedience and decreases with disobedience, and that the abandonment related to the foundation of *īmān* or its ruling is a nullifier of the contract, while what is less than that has details.

However, the Waʿīdiyyah made *īmān* a single, indivisible thing, so if a part of it is negated, all of it is negated, and thus they declared the perpetrators of sins to be disbelievers. The Murjiʿah, in contrast, made *īmān* unaffected by disobedience, saying: no sin harms with *īmān*, just as no obedience benefits with kufr. Both groups abolished the detail in the domains of the Sharīʿah and equated its pillars with its sunan, and its fundamentals with its branches.

Thus, a parallel occurred between these two innovations and two parties in our contemporary reality:

1. The "Islamic State" group (Dāʿish):

They made the implementation of the Sharīʿah a single package, in which no delay is permissible, nor any concession on any part, its small being like its great. Whoever does not implement all of it is a disbeliever. Whoever does not establish the *ḥudūd* immediately is an apostate. And whoever does not declare disavowal from every violation is an ally of the ṭāghūt. Thus, they were guilty of extremism in implementing the Sharīʿah without considering inability, fiqh, or legitimate gradualism. They replaced the fiqh of empowerment with the fiqh of haste and turned application into a standard of kufr and *īmān*, regardless of ability, the stations of gradualism, or the objectives of the Sharīʿah.

2. The Jūlānī Government:

They swung to the other extreme, making the implementation of the Sharīʿah in its entirety a changing, ijtihād-based sphere. For them, there is no difference between ruling by the Qurʾān and ruling by man-made law, nor between the foundation of the Sharīʿah and the garb of the phase, nor between that for which there is no excuse under any circumstance and that which may be delayed due to inability. They brought down the principles of ruling by what Allāh has revealed under the ceiling of "phased implementation" and made the normative frame of reference derived from the international system and the rules of modern civil law, not from the texts of revelation. Then the discourse shifted from *ḥākimiyyah* to public service, from Islam to inclusive citizenship, and from seeking judgment by the Sharīʿah to independent local legislations—all in the name of facilitation, ability, and public interest.

The error of both parties is one and the same: compound ignorance of the criteria for the ruling. This deviation can only be understood by tracing it back to a fundamental error in principles: the failure to differentiate between the types of rulings, the levels of the Sharīʿah, the conditions for application, and the controls of outcomes. Just as one who equates disobedience with a nullifier of *īmān* falls into misguidance, so too does one who equates the application of a *ḥudūd* with the application of the frame of reference of the Sharīʿah itself fall into misguidance. The government has conceded on the frame of reference, not just on the application. For the excuse of delaying a *ḥudūd* due to inability is permissible in the Sharīʿah with its controls, but silence about *ḥākimiyyah*, contentment with human legislation, and entry into an alternative system is not an excuse, but a nullification of the foundation of the dīn. In this, they have committed a compound crime: they equated what is permissible to postpone with what is not, justified deviation in the name of *maqāṣid*, and branded the sincere advisors and the steadfast as rigid people who do not

understand politics, and sometimes even accused them of *takfīr*, rebellion, and revolt. They turned advice into treason, adherence to the Sharīʿah into Khārijism, and proclaiming the ruling of Allāh into a threat to national cohesion.

In conclusion, *maqāṣid* are not a tool to abrogate the Sharīʿah. The flaw with these people was not just in their fiqh, but in their very foundational methodology. They made the *maqāṣid* a tool for abrogating the texts, instead of being a servant to them. Whoever claims today that the frame of reference of the Sharīʿah can be postponed in the name of inability, and that man-made rule can be coexisted with in the name of citizenship, has contradicted the foundation of the dīn and has called this "Sharīʿah," while in reality, it is an extreme *irjāʿ*, not fiqh or principled reasoning.

The Slippery Slope to Suspending the Sharīʿah

The specious argument of "gradualism in implementing the Sharīʿah" is one of the most dangerous specious arguments promoted in the contemporary tyrannical discourse in the name of *maqāṣid* and public interests. It is the first key to suspending the rulings of revelation based on the desires of reality and transforming *ḥākimiyyah* from a creedal foundation into a phased program, subject to suspension, postponement, or partial—and even total—annulment. This specious argument creeps in through a discourse that carefully chooses its words: "We believe in implementing the Sharīʿah, but...", "Gradualism is necessary," "Societal preparation takes precedence over textual confrontation," "Phased implementation is a political necessity"... until the image is beautified and the reality is emptied, and implementing the Sharīʿah becomes a raised slogan, not a revealed obligation. The affairs of the people are managed by the rule of reality, not by the rule of Allāh, and this is justified by saying that the phase does not allow it, the internal situation cannot bear it, and the outside world is watching. To show the invalidity of this specious argument, we must address its three aspects:

First: Implementing the Sharī‘ah is a creedal obligation, not a phased policy.

Implementing the Sharī‘ah is not an administrative matter, nor an organizational arrangement, but a definitive creedal foundation, which Allāh has made the criterion of *īmān* in His Book. He said: *{But no, by your Lord, they will not [truly] believe until they make you, [O Muḥammad], judge concerning that over which they dispute among themselves and then find within themselves no discomfort from what you have judged and submit in [full, willing] submission.}* [al-Nisā’ : 65]. *{Indeed, We sent down the Torah, in which was guidance and light. The prophets who submitted [to Allāh] judged by it for the Jews, as did the rabbis and scholars by that with which they were entrusted of the Scripture of Allāh, and they were witnesses thereto. So do not fear the people but fear Me, and do not exchange My verses for a small price. And whoever does not judge by what Allāh has revealed - then it is those who are the disbelievers.}* [al-Mā’idah: 44]. This ruling applies to one who abandons seeking judgment, or rejects the ruling, or legitimizes what is besides it, not to one who is unable to implement it while declaring his disbelief in the alternative.

The consensus of the people of knowledge has been transmitted that whoever does not rule by what Allāh has revealed out of belief or contentment is a disbeliever who has exited the religion. What we see today of a phased discourse from the supporters of the government (not from the government itself, as it has not originally spoken with a discourse of gradualism) is a deliberate postponement, an implicit contentment, and an actual replacement, managed with the logic of the state, not the Sharī‘ah, and justified with the language of "phased empowerment"—a language not known in the Book, the Sunnah, or any valid fiqh.

Second: Gradualism does not mean suspension, and phased implementation does not mean temporary annulment.

Gradualism has two contexts:

1. **In conveying the Sharīʿah:** as happened in the prohibition of alcohol and other things. This is specific to revelation and cannot be used as a basis for analogy, because it occurred by divine decree, not by human arrangement.
2. **In applying the rulings:** in cases of inability, fear of a greater fitnah, or weakness of authority. But on the condition that the ruling remains established in belief, declared in discourse, raised in statements, and guaranteed by a firm intention and disavowal from ruling by anything else.

As for what is happening today, it is not of this category. It is an abandonment of actual implementation, a replacement of the Sharīʿah's frame of reference with a man-made one, and an absence of the discourse of disavowal from tyrannical rule. This is not from legitimate gradualism, but from forbidden manipulation.

Third: Maqāṣid do not nullify the ruling but assist in its implementation.

One of the greatest things with which this discourse is cloaked today is that it hides behind the garments of the science of *maqāṣid* and claims that postponing the Sharīʿah is a valid Sharʿī interest. This is false from two aspects:

1. An interest is only considered valid with controls, the most important of which is that it does not contradict a Sharʿī text or principle, does not oppose a definitive ruling, and is not an imaginary or circumstantial interest at the expense of a Sharʿī principle.
2. Suspending the Sharīʿah in the name of an objective is a negation of the objective itself, because the greatest objective of the Sharīʿah is the preservation of the dīn, and the dīn is not preserved by beautifying secularism or by suspending *ḥākimiyyah*, but by declaring the sovereignty of revelation and disavowing what is besides it.

Delaying the implementation of the Sharī‘ah under the banner of *maqāṣid* means making it an optional function, not a Sharī‘ah obligation, and it convinces the followers that Jāhilī rule is temporarily acceptable as long as it is with good intention. This is a nullification of the contract of Tawḥīd from its foundation, not just a flaw in its application. Speaking about *maqāṣid* is not a phrase to be uttered or a ruling to be suspended; it is a statement about the entire Sharī‘ah, which entails consequences and from which rulings are born. The people of principles have established that the establishment of a statement about a thing necessitates its implications, and it is not possible to separate statements from what they entail, nor to differentiate between the principle and its consequences. Shaykh al-Islām said: "Whoever claims the establishment of a thing has claimed the establishment of its implications, and the implications of its implications, and so on, due to the necessity of non-separation. And whoever claims its negation has claimed its negation and the negation of its requisites, and the requisites of its requisites, and so on, due to the necessity of non-separation. So do not be heedless of this."⁵¹ This definitive rule blocks the path for anyone who tries to justify falsehood with the pretext of an imaginary interest, because every justification leads to an interconnected series of deviations. The suspension of the Sharī‘ah occurs in the name of considering reality, man-made rulings are legitimized in the name of averting harms, and the right of Allāh in legislation is wasted in the name of prioritizing. Imām ‘Izz al-Dīn ibn ‘Abd al-Salām said: "By Allāh, they will not reach anything except by Allāh, so how can Allāh be reached by other than Allāh!"⁵²

The Duality of Inability and Ability

One of the widest gates of deception upon the Ummah in times of fitnah is to use what is in itself true to justify an apparent falsehood. Among this is the claim of inability and necessity to justify the suspension of the Sharī‘ah. How often is it

⁵¹ Tanbīh al-Rajul al-‘Āqil (p. 63)

⁵² al-Qawā‘id al-Kubrā (vol. 1, p. 18)

repeated on the tongues of the leaders today—those who are affiliated with Islamic action—their statement: "We do not reject the Sharī‘ah, but we are unable to apply it, we are weakened, we are besieged, and if we were empowered, we would implement it." This statement, in its outward appearance, is an acknowledgment of the obligation to implement the Sharī‘ah while apologizing with inability, but in reality, it is a methodological circumvention of the foundation of the dīn, a deliberate falsification of the meaning of ability, and an expansion of the scope of excuse to include those with actual authority who have the power to establish the rule of Allāh but do not do so, and then claim they are not legally responsible for it.

These people think they are more capable of understanding the laws of the universe and the nature of humans than their Creator. They have turned away from the rulings of Allāh under the pretext of inability, then they have established rulings from themselves to keep pace with the sunan of the international system. This contains an elevation of the status of the intellect and placing it in the position of the legislating god, and a degradation of the sanctity of the Sharī‘ah! Imām al-Ḥaramayn said: "The intellects do not lead to the rulings in the details of the issues."⁵³ Imām al-Shāṭibī said: "Custom makes it impossible for the intellects to independently perceive their benefits and harms in detail in this world."⁵⁴ Imām Ibn al-‘Arabī said: "We have previously stated that the intellects cannot independently perceive the sciences until Allāh chooses from His creation those to whom He reveals what the intellect falls short of perceiving. But when it is presented to it, it is like a man who forgets a verse, an issue, or a person, and when it is recited to him, mentioned to him, or he sees him, he recognizes him."⁵⁵ Shaykh al-Islām said: "Nothing judges between the people in what they dispute except a revealed book and a sent prophet."⁵⁶ Imām al-Shāṭibī said: "The Lawgiver has established the laws and

⁵³ Ghiyāth al-Umam (p. 46)

⁵⁴ al-Muwāfaqāt (vol. 2, p. 78)

⁵⁵ Qānūn al-Ta’wīl (p. 646)

⁵⁶ al-Radd ‘alā al-Manṭiqiyyīn (p. 332)

obligated creation to follow their ways, and He has become the sole one to do so, because He has judged between creation in what they used to differ. Otherwise, if legislation were from the perceptions of creation, the laws would not have been revealed, the dispute between people would not have remained, and there would have been no need to send the messengers ⁵⁷ صلى الله عليه وسلم.

First: When is inability a valid Shar‘ī excuse?

Inability in the terminology of the Sharī‘ah is the lack of ability to perform a legal obligation while striving for it, not mere hardship, nor fear of blame, nor political calculations. Among the axioms of the Sharī‘ah in acting upon the fiqh of inability are:

1. That it be a real inability, not an imagined or assumed one.
2. That the one who is unable declares the obligation of what he is unable to do, and shows his hatred for its opposite, not remaining silent about it, nor acknowledging it, let alone coexisting with it.
3. That in his state of inability, he is striving to remove the impediment, not entrenching it, nor identifying with it, nor thinking well of it.
4. That he does not legitimize a false alternative in place of the obligation.

An example of this is a man who imagines a pain in his foot and believes his prayer is valid while lying down absolutely, without verifying the extent of the pain to see if it reaches the level of inability to stand or not, while declaring that standing is absolutely not required of him, without specifying it to the case of inability and without striving to remove the impediment to standing, and then legitimizing a non-Shar‘ī alternative. The one who is unable to stand should sit, but he has issued a fatwá for himself to lie down. Is the prayer of this foolish person valid under the pretext of necessity, *maqāṣid*, and public interest? If not, then are these conditions

⁵⁷ al-I‘tiṣām (vol. 1, p. 66)

met in those who run countries they call "Islamic" under a de facto authority, enacting laws, establishing courts, raising armies, and filling prisons, and yet they say: "We are not yet empowered to implement the Sharī'ah"? This is not inability, but evasion, practical contentment, political cunning, and a systematic employment of the rulings for the unable in order to pacify the followers and pass the gradual, postponed project.

Second: Ability is known by reality, not by claim.

Among the wonders promoted by the interpreters today is that ability is a psychological, unseen, or fragile political thing, known only by the estimation of the leadership! When they are debated about a postponed or suspended Shar'ī ruling, they say, "We are not able," and when they are asked for clarification or specification, they say, "The estimation of interests and abilities is a private matter." This is false. Ability is a tangible reality, known by the possession of authority, control of decision-making, and the power of execution.

Third: Ruling by other than what Allāh has revealed is not made permissible by inability.

There is a clear difference in the Sharī'ah between omission and replacement. Whoever is unable to perform an obligation, the sin is lifted from him, but it is not permissible for him to replace it with a false ruling, nor to be content with its opposite. And whoever leaves the ruling of Allāh for an excuse, it is not permissible for him to establish a man-made system as an alternative, or to participate in its legislation, or to show contentment with it.

Fourth: Among the signs of political hypocrisy is turning "inability" into a creed.

Among the most dangerous things used as evidence today is that the Sharī‘ah is not implemented due to the lack of complete societal preparation, constitutional requirements, or international contexts, until the Sharī‘ah ruling is emptied of its binding nature and turned into a vague phase, whose time is known only to the members of the political office. This type of postponement of revelation in the name of "lack of ability" is a soft deception and a distortion of the criterion of legal responsibility, until Jāhilī rule becomes the normal situation, and the Sharī‘ah becomes the alternative option upon maturation. Allāh the Exalted said: *{Indeed, those whom the angels take [in death] while wronging themselves - [the angels] will say, "In what [condition] were you?" They will say, "We were oppressed in the land." The angels will say, "Was not the earth of Allāh spacious [enough] for you to emigrate therein?" For those, their refuge is Hell - and evil it is as a destination.}* [al-Nisā’: 97]. Allāh refuted their claim of being oppressed because they were content with other than His rule and fell short of the requirements of support, loyalty, and seeking judgment.

Fifth: Maqāṣid do not suspend the fundamentals of the dīn.

It is established in the principles of *maqāṣid* that an objective does not nullify a text, does not oppose what is definitive, and does not legislate independently. Seeking judgment by the Sharī‘ah is a definitive principle. If it is claimed that postponing it is an interest, then the interest has been made a legislator, not a restricted one, and this is one of the greatest forms of hijacking the *maqāṣid* and employing them to demolish the Sharī‘ah from within. Let us emphasize a matter we have mentioned repeatedly, which is that the intended suspension of the Sharī‘ah is the replacement of the Sharī‘ah frame of reference in deriving and applying rulings with a man-made law. That is, the constitution has become a substitute for the Qur’ān, from which political rulings are extracted, while the Qur’ān remains for extracting the rulings of pure acts of worship. This is a nullification of the foundation of the dīn.

Whoever is content with the intellects of humans and is filled with them becomes heedless of the texts of revelation, even if he repeats them. And if the will to conform to the Western model takes over the heart, the will to implement the Sharī‘ah is displaced, even if he claims it with his tongue. The great scholar Ibn al-Qayyim said: "Allāh, the Glorified, has not made for a man two hearts in his chest. To the extent that a concern, a will, and a love enters the heart, a corresponding concern, will, and love exits from it. It is a single vessel, and the drinks are multiple. Whichever drink fills it, there is no room left for another. The vessel is only filled with the highest of drinks if it finds it empty. But if it finds it filled with something else, it will not reside with it until what is in it is removed, and then it settles in its place."⁵⁸ So whoever fills his heart with the concern of international acceptance will be empty of the concern of implementing the Sharī‘ah, and whoever chases after the pleasure of the international system will not find in his heart pure reverence for revelation, even if he claims to be realizing the *maqāṣid*.

Section Two: Political Interpretations in the Name of Maqāṣid

One of the greatest gates of deviation in this era is the gate of political, *maqāṣid*-based interpretation, where the language of the Sharī‘ah and the terminology of *maqāṣid* are used to legitimize discourses that have no connection to the dīn and no correctness in fiqh. They are imported from the tables of the United Nations and international covenants and are packaged with the vocabulary of facilitation, public interest, and outcomes.

If the specious argument in the first domain was the suspension of the Sharī‘ī ruling under the pretext of inability and gradualism, then the specious argument in this domain is the alteration of the Sharī‘ī discourse itself, in the name of *maqāṣid* and Sharī‘ī politics, so that in the field, there is no longer the rule of Allāh, nor even its

⁵⁸ Ṭarīq al-Hijratayn (p. 85)

language. Instead, the terminologies of nationalism, openness, inclusive identity, tolerance, integration, and social cohesion prevail. All of this is not a permissible *ijtihād* in implementing public interest, but a rejected interpretation that creates an alternative discourse to the Sharīʿah, raises the people to believe in the system instead of believing in revelation, on mutual respect instead of *al-walāʾ wa-l-barāʾ*, on openness instead of disassociation, and on citizenship instead of creed.

Shaykh al-Ṭarīfī draws attention to a grave and systematic negligence of the primary function of a Muslim ruler, which is to carry the concern of calling to Allāh and conveying Islam to non-Muslims, especially presidents and kings. This negligence is not a personal behavior but a reflection of a contemporary modern pattern based on separating religion from foreign policies and neutralizing Islam from official political discourse. What is more dangerous is that the absence of this missionary function is often justified by imagined *maqāṣid*, such as avoiding stirring up sensitivities, preserving higher interests, or avoiding political embarrassment. Thus, silence about conveying the message transforms into a matter of interest founded on the principles of the Sharīʿah. Shaykh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Ṭarīfī said: "It is prescribed for a Muslim ruler to write to the kings of other lands and the heads of non-Muslim peoples, calling them to Islam. This is the greatest of the tasks of one in authority: preserving the dīn among the people, and spreading and conveying it, because he acts as a deputy for the Prophet ﷺ in that. It is not permissible for a ruler to limit his connections and correspondence with non-Muslim nations and states to worldly interests like economics and regulations, and to leave the greatest matter, which is calling them to Islam, even if the call is being carried out by others. This is because his undertaking of this task is a magnification of it, and it is the primary task of the caliphs. Correspondence from him has an effect on the people, presidents, and kings, unlike from others, and the call from those below him often does not reach the heads of the people, but is limited to the populace, and in the souls of the great and the

leaders there is disdain, arrogance, and loftiness, and they often do not accept except from their equals."⁵⁹

The imāms have clarified that public interest does not legislate independently, nor is it used to demolish creedal foundations, and that Sharīʿ politics is restricted by the constraints of the texts and governed by the rules of the creed. It does not make the forbidden permissible, nor does it change a fundamental principle. But the people of our time have made these terms mounts for changing concepts and pretexts for taming the Sharīʿah until it fits the international requirements. In this domain, we will present three blatant examples of this type of interpretation:

1. Interpreting humiliation as public interest.
2. Falsifying the religious identity of minorities.
3. Replacing creed with nationalism.

We will weigh these distortions with the scale of the Sharīʿah: not just by considering their political reality, but by considering the corruption of the very foundation of the distortion. We will prove that these deviations are not outcomes of *ijtihād*, but conceptual changes that empty the dīn of its mission and turn it into a symbolic facade. For *maqāṣid*, when separated from the texts, become a tool for false legislation, not a means for understanding the truth, and politics, when left without the controls of the creed, becomes a soft shirk or a blatant compromise. This is not from the fiqh of outcomes, but from the cunning of interpretation, and not from implementing public interests, but from changing foundational principles.

Interpreting Humiliation as Public Interest

Among the most wondrous things you see in the era of the Sharīʿah's estrangement is that humiliation transforms into wisdom, prostration into realism, and violation of

⁵⁹ al-Tafsīr wa-al-Bayān (vol. 4, p. 1947)

al-walā' wa-l-barā' into averting harms! This is the result of what institutional politics has come to among those who claim to be engaged in Jihād, after the spirit of the creed has been stripped from it, and it has submitted to the logic of modern international relations and the balances of internal and external affairs. All of this has been cloaked in the garb of *maqāṣid*, the expressions of public interests, and gradualism in application! The truth is that this matter is not related to estimating a partial interest; it is a clear aggression against the fundamentals of the dīn, and especially against the principle of *al-walā' wa-l-barā'*, which is a pillar of belief, a requirement of disassociation, and a title for affiliation and enmity.

First: What is meant by interpreting humiliation?

It is adopting a discourse of political submission to warring minorities, or to international bodies, or to the great adversaries of the dīn as a fixed path in institutional work, and then justifying it with fiqh in the name of paramount interest, repelling harm, phased empowerment, social coexistence, and preventing sectarian strife.

This humiliation is manifested in several forms, including: turning a blind eye to the enmity of warring apostates under the pretext of unifying the ranks or civil peace, participating in normalizing dialogue platforms that equate Islam with kufr, glorifying sectarian minorities or elevating their symbols, and promoting a discourse of coexistence with them without denouncing their creedal state. Then, in justification of all this, it is said: "Public interest requires it, necessity justifies it, and the phase of empowerment imposes it."

Second: This interpretation contradicts the fundamentals of the Sharī'ah in creed and loyalty.

Allāh the Exalted said: *{O you who have believed, do not take My enemies and your enemies as allies, extending to them affection while they have disbelieved in what has*

come to you of the truth, having driven out the Messenger and yourselves [only] because you believe in Allāh, your Lord. If you have come out for Jihād in My cause and seeking My approval, [do not take them as allies]. You confide to them affection, but I am most knowing of what you have concealed and what you have declared. And whoever does it from among you has certainly strayed from the soundness of the way. If they gain dominance over you, they would be to you as enemies and extend against you their hands and their tongues with evil, and they wish you would disbelieve. Never will your relatives or your children benefit you; on the Day of Resurrection He will judge between you. And Allāh, of what you do, is Seeing. There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Abraham and those with him, when they said to their people, "Indeed, we are disassociated from you and from whatever you worship other than Allāh. We have rejected you, and there has appeared between us and you animosity and hatred forever until you believe in Allāh alone" - except for the saying of Abraham to his father, "I will surely ask forgiveness for you, but I have no power for you from Allāh at all." [They said], "Our Lord, upon You we have relied, and to You we have returned, and to You is the destination. Our Lord, make us not a trial for those who have disbelieved, and forgive us, our Lord. Indeed, it is You who is the Exalted in Might, the Wise."} [al-Mumtaḥanah: 1-5].

Al-walā' wa-l-barā' is not an emotional stance but a worshipful behavior, represented in: not appointing a disbeliever as an ally or allying with him against a Muslim, not praising apostates or integrating them into the body of the Islamic state, and showing opposition in identity, discourse, and legislation. As for the disbeliever becoming a respected ally, or his sect being presented as "part of the social fabric," or the state's frame of reference being distorted so as not to embarrass them—this is a coup against the Sharʿī objective of preserving the dīn.

Third: Public interest does not contradict what is definitive nor does it nullify the creed.

The people of knowledge have established that an interest is not considered a Shar‘ī interest unless it conforms to a definitive text or principle of the Sharī‘ah, and it is not permissible to use it as a pretext to nullify a creedal foundation or suspend an apparent ruling. Remaining silent about apostates, or beautifying the image of disbelieving sects, or allying with them against the Muslims—all of this cannot be justified by a claimed interest, because it is a definitive harm and a clear violation of the contract of *al-walā’ wa-l-barā’*. Shaykh al-Islām said: "There is no dispute among the Muslims that it is not permissible to command or permit the utterance of a word of kufr for any purpose whatsoever. Rather, whoever utters it is a disbeliever, unless he is coerced and speaks with his tongue while his heart is at rest with faith."⁶⁰

Fourth: Shar‘ī politics is restricted by the maqāṣid, it does not empty them.

One of the most dangerous things that occurs in this domain is that Shar‘ī politics is used as a pretext to justify humiliation, as if everything that the leader sees as beneficial for the project is considered permissible, even if it contradicts the texts, violates the principles of belief, and includes allegiance to the disbeliever and beautification of the apostate. This is an inverted fiqh, as the *maqāṣid* restrict politics, they do not set it free.

What is today called openness, national interest, and civil peace—if it is not controlled by the texts of the Sharī‘ah and the regulations of the creed—is a veiled modern humiliation that contradicts Tawḥīd from its very foundation and raises generations on respecting kufr, accepting apostasy, and normalizing relations with the enemy.

What we see today of a discourse that praises the Nuṣayrī, the Druze, and the Christian..., that sidelines the fiqh of loyalty, that excludes the fiqh of disavowal, and that remains silent about the internal and external ṭawāghīt, and then it is said, "the *maqāṣid* of the Sharī‘ah"—this is not fiqh, but a soft demolition of the creed and a

⁶⁰ al-Fatāwā al-Kubrā (vol. 6, p. 86)

slow dismantling of the awe of the dīn. Let the *maqāṣid* be returned to their texts, and politics to its limits, and let revelation not be taken as a mount to flatter the ṭawāghīt, beautify apostasy, and silence the da‘wah in the name of balance.

Falsifying the Religious Identity of Minorities

Among the eloquent sayings of the imāms in the fiqh of *al-walā’ wa-l-barā’* is that creedal distinction is a foundation in preserving the dīn, and that the blurring of the lines between faith and kufr is the first sign of civilizational defeat. When the distinctions are erased, loyalties are mixed, and the name of kufr disappears from the discourse, the awe of the creed is brought down, the truths of the Sharī‘ah are falsified, and the dīn transforms into a symbolic umbrella that includes everyone, without denunciation or disassociation. This is what we are witnessing today under the title of "coexistence," where the description of the Druze, the Nuṣayrīs, the Christians, and others is manipulated. The attribute of kufr and apostasy is lifted from them, and they are included under the title of "components of society," or "authentic religious minorities," or "brothers in the homeland," or even "people of Islam" for sects whose apostasy has been definitively established by the consensus of Ahl al-Sunnah.

First: Among the greatest objectives of the Sharī‘ah is to distinguish faith from kufr.

Allāh the Exalted said: *{And never will the Jews or the Christians be pleased with you until you follow their religion. Say, "Indeed, the guidance of Allāh is the [only] guidance." And if you were to follow their desires after what has come to you of knowledge, you would have against Allāh no protector or helper.}* [al-Baqarah: 120]. *{Say, "O disbelievers..."}* [al-Kāfirūn: 1]. The people of principles have clarified that distinguishing faith from kufr is a foundation in preserving the dīn, and that it is not permissible to nullify the description of kufr from its people if the conditions are

met and the impediments are removed, even if it is called politics or public interest. If the political discourse today says about the Nuṣayrī, the Druze, or the Christian that he is "open to the Islamic project" or "part of the internal fabric" or that his "religion and privacy are respected" without declaring his kufr and apostasy—and in fact, the opposite is known—then this is a falsification of identity, an effacement of a creedal boundary, and a betrayal of the trust of clarification.

Second: It is not permissible to include the apostate in the circle of the "Sharī'ly recognized."

The apostate, in the scale of the Sharī'ah, is not just a citizen but a combatant, who is dealt with according to his situation. He is not given a valid frame of reference nor an acceptable religious description. The Druze, by the agreement of the people of knowledge, are extreme Bāṭinīs, not from the Muslims, nor from the people of the covenant (*ahl al-dhimmah*), but from the disbelieving apostates. The Nuṣayrīs, as the imāms have established, are disbelievers who are outside the religion of Islam, from whom no *jizyah* is accepted, and for whom no contract is recognized, unless they show repentance and true Islam. If these are described today as religious minorities or Islamic sects whose fiqh is a reference in law-making, and the description of apostasy is dropped from them, and this is promoted in the state media, government statements, and diplomatic pulpits, then this is not *ijtihād*, but a suspension of definitive texts, an alteration of the clarification, and a beautification of kufr. The great scholar Ibn al-Qayyim said: "There is no dispute among the Ummah that it is not permissible to permit the utterance of a word of kufr for any purpose whatsoever, except for the one who is coerced while his heart is at rest with faith."⁶¹

Third: Imagined public interest does not permit concealing or falsifying kufr.

⁶¹ I'lam al-Muwaqqi'in (vol. 5, p. 99)

Some have claimed that this change is for the purpose of winning hearts, or gaining the popular base, or preventing internal fitnah. This is false from two aspects:

1. Disavowal from kufr does not contradict good justice and treatment. The Prophet ﷺ lived with the Jews, but he did not drop the description of kufr from them, nor did he say, "They are our people." This proves the invalidity of their method.
2. Silence about describing a disbeliever as a disbeliever is not winning hearts but compromise. Allāh the Exalted said: *{You will not find a people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred. Those - He has written in their hearts faith and supported them with spirit from Him. And We will admit them to gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide eternally. Allāh is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him. Those are the party of Allāh. Unquestionably, the party of Allāh - they are the successful.}* [al-Mujādalah: 22]. It is not permissible to bargain on this creed, nor is it said, "We postpone the clarification," because abandoning the clarification is a loss of a principle from the principles of *īmān*.

Fourth: Islamic discourse does not change with the seasons of politics.

The Sharīʿah was not made to be a flexible material that changes color with the color of conferences and international reports. It is a trust of clarification, a steadfastness of position, and a creedal disassociation. It is not said of the Druze, "He is a nationalist Muslim," nor of the Nuṣayrī, "There is no difference between us," nor is the description of shirk lifted from the Christian under the pretext of shared human values. Rather, it is said as Allāh ﷻ said: *{They have certainly disbelieved who say, "Allāh is the third of three." And there is no god except one God. And if they do not desist from what they are saying, there will surely afflict the disbelievers among them a*

painful punishment.} [al-Mā'idah: 73]. And it is said of the apostate: he is an apostate, until he repents. Whoever legitimizes otherwise in the name of *maqāṣid* has made the *maqāṣid* a path to falsifying the creed, has removed the distinction between kufr and Islam, and then has attributed that to fiqh. This is from the most invalid of falsehoods and the ugliest of deceptions.

Let it be known, then, that whoever includes the apostate under the cloak of a Muslim brother, or beautifies the disbeliever in the name of openness, or remains silent about apostasy in the name of public interest, has participated in deceiving the people about their dīn, has betrayed the knowledge he is affiliated with, and has confused the common people about their dīn, and he is responsible on the Day of Resurrection before Allāh, and his ruling is apostasy and departure from Islam. Shaykh al-Islām said: "And if a man were to speak a word of kufr for his worldly interests without truly believing it, his kufr would be correct both inwardly and outwardly. This is because the servant is commanded to speak the word of faith while believing in its reality, and not to speak the word of kufr or falsehood, neither seriously nor in jest. So if he speaks of kufr or falsehood seriously or in jest, he is a disbeliever or a liar in reality, because jesting with these words is not permissible. Thus, the attribute of jesting is disregarded in the view of the Sharī'ah because it is forbidden, and so the word remains, necessitating its implication."⁶²

Nationalism as an Alternative to Creed

There is nothing more dangerous to the dīn than for its creedal foundation to be replaced with an alternative frame of reference, which is given a sanctity it does not possess, and is burdened with what it cannot bear, and then is presented to the people in the garb of consensus, coexistence, and belonging, until the Islamic identity is nullified as the primary governor, and is replaced by the national identity as the supreme reference and the unifying source. This is what has happened and is

⁶² al-Fatāwā al-Kubrā (vol. 6, p. 75)

happening in the new Syrian experience, where the creed has transformed from a foundation that unifies the ranks and controls loyalties into an obstacle that embarrasses the political discourse, and the homeland has become that upon which the banner is tied, the forces are gathered, the foundational principles are restricted, and the Sharī‘ah is reshaped within its borders, not above it.

First: Creed is the basis of community, not geography.

It is well known that Islam has not made land, race, language, or blood the basis of belonging. It has made the creed alone the unifying bond. Allāh the Exalted said: *{O you who have believed, do not put [yourselves] before Allāh and His Messenger but fear Allāh. Indeed, Allāh is Hearing and Knowing.}* [al-Ḥujurāt: 10]. *{Indeed, those who have believed and emigrated and fought with their wealth and their lives in the cause of Allāh and those who gave shelter and aided - they are allies of one another. And those who believed but did not emigrate - for you there is no duty of alliance toward them until they emigrate. But if they seek your help in the [matter of] religion, then you must help, except against a people between whom and you is a treaty. And Allāh, of what you do, is Seeing.}* [al-Anfāl: 72]. He made the bond of faith above the bond of the homeland, and above the borders of geography, politics, and covenants. He made disassociation from the disbeliever, even if he is a neighbor, and allegiance to the believer, even if he is in the farthest part of the earth. As for nationalism in its contemporary concept, it is based on replacing the creed with the unity of land, history, and political symbol, which is a concept imported from the philosophies of Western modernity, created to unite secular, irreligious peoples, and was brought to us by the modern state as part of the package of political Westernization.

Second: Giving precedence to nationalism over creed leads to changing al-walā’ wa-l-barā’.

When nationalism is made the supreme standard of belonging, the requirements of *al-walā' wa-l-barā'* must fall with it. The warring apostate is not denounced if he is a son of the homeland, and the mujāhid is not given allegiance if he deviates from the national system, and the creedal sects are equated under the banner of inclusive citizenship. Allegiance to the homeland becomes precedent over allegiance to faith, and enmity to the state's adversaries becomes precedent over disavowal from the enemies of Allāh. This is an inversion of the Shar'ī scales and an abrogation of the scale of *al-walā' wa-l-barā'*, which is a principle from the principles of Tawḥīd. The issue is not considered merely a political discourse, but an aggression against the frame of reference of Islam in controlling affiliation and enmity.

Third: Maqāṣid do not legitimize the abrogation of the frame of reference.

The interpreter may claim that adopting the discourse of nationalism is for the sake of political facilitation, achieving civil peace, or winning the societal base. This is false from two aspects:

1. Transforming the frame of reference from Islam to the homeland is not a Shar'ī interest but a definitive harm, because it nullifies the foundation of the dīn, equates between sects and laws, and makes the Sharī'ah subservient, not ruling.
2. *Maqāṣid* are not used to nullify the texts, nor to abrogate creedal loyalty with political affinity.

Fourth: Partisan nationalism divides what the dīn has united.

Among the most dangerous effects of making nationalism an alternative to the creed is that it dismantles the unity of the Ummah, transforms the bond of Islam into a circumstantial alliance, and gives precedence to loyalty to the party and the institution over loyalty to Islam and its people. The army fights the mujāhidīn in the name of "rebellion against the authority of the homeland," the callers are excluded

because they "do not belong to the inclusive national project," and weapons are brandished in the name of "confronting the extremists," who are the bearers of the Sharīʿah who are steadfast upon its principles. This is the political ṭāghūt itself, even if it wears the garb of the revolution and speaks with something that resembles the Sharīʿah.

Conclusion

This research was not a review of scattered events, nor a tracking of individual mistakes, nor a response to a passing discourse. Rather, it was an attempt to uncover a complete path of methodological transformation that has afflicted the Jihādī project at a critical moment in its history—a transformation that did not stop at the level of political or organizational discourse, but affected the principles of the creed, the objectives of the Sharīʿah, and the goals of Jihād. It is a transformation that did not come suddenly, but was growing in the shadows, feeding on the rubble of defeats, and cloaking itself in the slogans of public interest and *maqāṣid*, until it was established on its throne and began to tighten its grip on every sincere voice and every banner-bearer who did not change.

The project has transitioned from being a voice that reminds of the khilāfah to an authority that pledges allegiance to the international system. From a banner carried to implement the Sharīʿah to a national slogan raised to please the inside and the outside. And from a discourse that openly proclaims Tawḥīd and disavowal from tyranny to a call that is embarrassed to mention Allāh in conferences. Then came the catastrophe: Jihād was emptied of its soul, the state was stripped of its identity, and the banner of the ruler was raised above the banner of revelation. The most dangerous thing about this phase is that it does not promise correction, nor does it pave the way for revision, but it proceeds with confident steps towards repeating the bitter experience: the making of a new tyrant in the name of the revolution, the

legitimization of a new authority in the name of the Sharī‘ah, and the preparation of a functional project in the name of *maqāṣid*. What we see today is not the end of the deviation, but its wide gate. When this path is met with silence, and the leader is left to proceed without review, it is no surprise that blood will be shed in the name of unity, mouths will be muzzled in the name of security, and the mujāhid will be fought in the name of realism. Indeed, Jihād itself will be reinterpreted to become a battle against the last of those who remained on the covenant!

Therefore, this conclusion was not an observation of what has passed, but a call for what must be done now, before we are surprised by a new ruler, founded on the ruins of the dīn, and marketed as the savior, when he is but the one who will demolish what remains of the banner of Jihād and Tawḥīd.

Summary of the Transformations and Their Danger to the Jihādī Project

What has occurred is not a jurisprudential difference in the branches of politics, nor a field-level *ijtihād* in managing battles, but a fundamental change in the structure of the Jihādī project itself: a change in its direction, its goals, its discourse, and its message.

What was presented as Jihād for the unification of Allāh, the establishment of His dīn, and the liberation of the Ummah from tyranny has gradually and then openly transformed into a political administration that hopes for international recognition, seeks security from the major powers, and rehabilitates itself to the measure of the global system that Jihād originally came out to nullify, not to integrate into.

These transformations have passed through precise stages, each one heralding what would come after it and preparing the hearts to accept the final catastrophe:

- The creed was excluded from the political statement, and slogans of development, administration, and stability took its place, to the point that

mentioning Tawḥīd and disavowal from the ṭāghūt became embarrassing for the official spokesmen.

- Jihād was downsized from an international obligation to a local function, in which borders are served, not the creed, and battles are fought not to implement the Sharīʿah but to protect the entity.
- The sincere scholars and the devoted educators were sidelined, and in their place emerged promoters and jurists of the authority, who do not issue *fatāwā* except to justify silence, and do not issue anything except what pleases the leadership.
- The educational and daʿwah institutions were nationalized, and the religious discourse began to be carefully selected, not to raise people on Tawḥīd, but to condition them to obedience.
- The true objectives of the Sharīʿah were replaced with temporary and imaginary interests. Necessities began to be decided in the offices of politics, and then the jurist was asked to follow along and justify them.

Thus, the structure was nullified from its foundation, the Jihādī project was stripped of its soul, and it became a body without an identity, moving to please the other, not to worship Allāh, presenting itself to the world, not to the Ummah, and seeking legitimacy from the West, not from revelation.

This coup is not merely a deviation; it is the greatest danger to the Jihādī project since its inception in the modern era, because it produces a new functional model: a model that carries the name of Jihād and the form of an Islamic state, but in reality, is a modified version of the systems of tyranny, ruling by other than what Allāh has revealed, excluding those who remind of Allāh, and pursuing the people of the creed in the name of stability!

The most dangerous thing about this path is that it raises generations of mujāhidīn on blind obedience and personal loyalty, and it reformulates the Islamic understanding with a lame political vision, which beautifies secularism with the garments of religion and establishes tyranny in the name of the banner.

Here, if this deviation is met with silence, and this path is accepted, then a new generation of leaders who are only good at negotiating should be expected, a new generation of soldiers who do not know their creed, and a new generation of peoples who do not see the difference between the banner of Jihād and the banner of the regime. And at that point, it will not be surprising if the real enemy becomes everyone who reminds them of what they were upon the day they cried out: *{Have you not considered the eminent among the Children of Israel after Moses, when they said to a prophet of theirs, "Send to us a king, and we will fight in the cause of Allāh"? He said, "Would you perhaps not fight if fighting was prescribed for you?" They said, "And why should we not fight in the cause of Allāh when we have been driven out from our homes and from our children?" But when fighting was prescribed for them, they turned away, except for a few of them. And Allāh is Knowing of the wrongdoers.}* [al-Baqarah: 246].

Entering into the Government's Ranks

The brothers should not differ to the point of conflict and dispute on the issue of working with the Jūlānī government, if their principles are one in deeming it misguided and rejecting its secular project, even if their *ijtihādāt* vary in their practical stance towards it.

Some of them see that entering its ranks (within some of its joints) is a means of preparation, planning, and inflicting harm, on the condition of clarity of intention and disassociation from the sources of injustice. And some of them see that avoiding it is a withdrawal from falsehood and a piety from what is doubtful. Both groups are

rewarded for their *ijtihād* if their intention is sound and they are on the side of the Ummah, not the transgressing ruler.

The chosen view (in general) is that if a mujāhid brother is clear about his matter, is in contact with his sincere brothers inside and outside, and his intention is to strengthen himself in the obedience of Allāh and to wait to align himself in the arena of true Jihād, then there is no harm upon him in entering some of the joints of the government, especially in the fields of military preparation or administrative and professional building, on the condition of avoiding the places of injustice and staying away from the internal fitnah in which the mujāhid is drawn to be a tool in the hand of the tyrant.

The standard here is the true affiliation: not to the job, but to the banner; not to the government, but to the *manhaj*. This estimation is from the fiqh of new calamities, not from the betrayal of the creed. Shaykh al-Islām said: "The domain of conflict [of evidences] is a very wide domain, especially in times and places where the traces of prophethood and the caliphate of prophethood have diminished, for these issues abound in them. The more the deficiency increases, the more these issues increase. The existence of that is one of the causes of fitnah among the Ummah. For when good deeds are mixed with evil deeds, ambiguity and correlation occur. Some people may look at the good deeds and give precedence to this side, even if it includes great evil deeds. And some people may look at the evil deeds and give precedence to the other side, even if it means abandoning great good deeds. And the moderate ones who look at both matters may not have the amount of benefit and harm clear to them or to most of them, or it may be clear to them, but they do not find anyone who will help them in doing the good deeds and leaving the evil deeds, because desires have been coupled with opinions."⁶³ He also said: "A man should not criticize and forbid a light in which there is darkness, unless a light with no darkness is obtained.

⁶³ Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā (vol. 20, p. 58)

Otherwise, how many of those who turn away from that will leave the light completely when someone else leaves it because of the darkness he saw in the ways of the people."⁶⁴

Rectifying the Calamities Before the Catastrophe

The greatest thing that can be hoped for at this critical moment in the history of the arena is that some of those who were in the entourage of the tyrant will awaken to what they have committed, know their sin, and realize that the injustices and violations they have fallen into, and the turning away from the covenant, are not of the category of *ijtihād* nor are they requirements of politics, but are among the greatest things that anger Allāh, tear apart the ranks of the Ummah, and reject a righteous deed in the dead of night. Al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī said: "And what crime is greater than that you pledge allegiance to a man, then you withdraw your hand from his obedience, break the deal, and fight him with your sword, or you forsake him until he is killed?"⁶⁵

And if these people repent, the door of repentance is open, and Allāh accepts from the most despicable of His servants if he is sincere. So let him repent who has shed blood, or legislated injustice, or pledged allegiance based on desire, or distorted the banner of Tawḥīd, or praised one who is not to be praised. Let him begin his repentance from the beginning of the road: from the days of "Jabhat al-Nuṣrah," through the breaking of the pledge of allegiance to the mujāhidīn, and ending with the distortion of the *manhaj* and the approval of secularism.

However, repentance, even if it is accepted between him and his Lord, does not equal trustworthiness or automatic righteousness in the eyes of the people. It is not appropriate for one who has betrayed, or been involved, or beautified falsehood one

⁶⁴ Majmū' al-Fatāwā (vol. 10, p. 364)

⁶⁵ al-Kabā'ir (p. 327)

day, to be entrusted with the joints of leadership or to be presented to the people, even if good or subsequent sincerity appears from him. For experience has proven that methodological deviation is deep, and the flaw in perception is not mended by an individual's repentance. It is from the rules of divine decree that one who has been corrupted in a matter is not trusted with it. He is placed under restriction not as a punishment, but as a protection for the responsibility and a preservation of the position, just as refuge is sought in Allāh from appointing one who seeks it. Imām ‘Izz al-Dīn ibn ‘Abd al-Salām said: "As for the one who repents from transgression, his word is not accepted in his repentance until his righteousness is established. A long period must pass in which his truthfulness is known by his adherence to chivalry, avoidance of major sins, and shunning of persistence in minor sins. When he reaches a point where it is highly probable that he is righteous, just as it is highly probable that other righteous people are righteous, we accept his testimony, because it provides the probability that the testimony of other righteous people provides."⁶⁶ Shaykh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Ṭarīfī said: "Those who relapse from the truth and then return to it, their repentance is accepted, and their return is praised, and their past is not gloated over. But they are not given positions of authority or leadership over the Ummah, nor positions of influence in it. This is because they cannot be trusted not to return to what they were upon. Vacillation is a characteristic of the hypocrites, and it may be due to a lack of sound judgment and reason, all of which harms the Ummah."⁶⁷ This is a general rule for everyone who has violated the *manhaj* and been tainted with deviation, even if signs of righteousness appear on him. Empowerment is not given to those with a dangerous past except after a long period of testing. It has been said what has become almost like an established rule among the wise: "I am not a deceiver, nor does a deceiver deceive me."

⁶⁶ al-Qawā‘id al-Kubrā (vol. 2, p. 74)

⁶⁷ al-Tafsīr wa-al-Bayān (vol. 3, p. 1546)

It is incumbent upon the people of knowledge and the sincere shaykhs to declare their disavowal from this path, not to build one interpretation upon another, nor to remain silent about the tyrant in the name of wisdom or blocking the means [to evil]. For there remains in this society an ember of faith and a remnant of natural disposition that is still seeking the voice of truth if it speaks, and listening to the discourse of the Sharī‘ah if it comes from a pious heart and a tongue that does not fear the blame of any blamer in the cause of Allāh.

As long as the sword has not yet been drawn against everyone who speaks, silence is a crime, and proclaiming the truth today is not just a testimony but a Jihād that revives what the people of heedlessness have killed and awakens those who have forgotten that if the revolution began with the cry of "Allāhu Akbar," it should not end with applause for the new tyrant. Al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī said: "Proclaiming the truth is a great matter; it requires strength and sincerity. The sincere one without strength is unable to carry it out, and the strong one without sincerity is forsaken. Whoever carries it out completely is a truthful one (*ṣiddīq*). And whoever is weak, the least he can do is to feel pain and to denounce it with his heart. There is no faith beyond that. There is no power except with Allāh."⁶⁸

Let those who remain from the people of truth know that retreating from the deviation is not enough on its own. It must be followed by a clear stripping of the banner of Jihād, a restoration of the standing of the sincere scholars, and a historical trial for everyone who has shed blood or established secularism with the garb of public interest. Otherwise, we will be surprised to find that the project that was adorned in the name of the dīn will bequeath a tyrant more severe than his predecessor and will hand over the banner of the Ummah to its enemy once again, but this time in the name of the Sharī‘ah!

⁶⁸ Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’ (vol. 11, p. 234)

Al-Jūlanī Will Inevitably Begin to Fight

It is one of the sunan of tyranny that it cannot tolerate the existence of a dissenter, does not allow for neutrality, and does not accept that anyone should share with it in the arena of politics and thought. Therefore, al-Jūlanī, now that his authority has been established, his tools of power have been completed, and he has tightened his control over the arena, will not be satisfied with anything less than complete submission, and he will not give respite to the dissenters, no matter how long their silence, how much their tone has retreated, or how gentle their discourse has become. Indeed, everyone who remains from the people of the *manhaj*, or even those who are secluded in education and *dhikr*—all of these, in the scale of the new authority, are a potential danger, from whom an uprising is expected at any moment. Therefore, they must be disciplined before they move.

The features of this path have already begun to appear:

- Whoever spoke was imprisoned, whoever advised was defamed, and whoever did not submit was besieged.
- The curricula of the institutes and courses that graduate soldiers on the Jihādī *manhaj* have been distorted.
- The security agencies have begun to differentiate between the committed mujāhid and the disciplined citizen.

If this project proceeds without a deterrent, the coming battle (as is the case in the sunan of history) will not be between one authority and another, nor between one faction and another, but between the new tyrant and the remnants of truth in the arena, just as the tyrants before began in Egypt, Syria, and Iraq, and just as the cycle will begin anew if this savage project is met with silence.

Al-Jūlānī will not declare war in the name of tyranny (far be it from him); he will call it "maintaining security," "protecting internal cohesion," and "liquidating pockets of extremism." The jurists of public interest will justify it, and his media will portray it as a "national duty," and it will be presented to the people as a "final attempt to protect the revolution" from its own sons!

But in reality, it is a war on the dīn, not on terrorism, and a fight against the people of faith, not the instigators of chaos. It will begin when the leader decides that he has completed the pillars of his tyranny, and all that remains is to finish the last page of the project of the Ummah. This prophecy is not a pessimistic reading, but a realistic warning based on the sunan of despotism, the behaviors of arrogance, and the history of tyrants who cannot even tolerate the shadow that reminds them that they are not gods.

It is Not Permissible to Let Him Increase in Tyranny; Rather, He Must Be Restrained and Fought if Necessary

Whoever contemplates this escalating path of dismantling the dīn and establishing the ruler's authority realizes that remaining silent about it is not a neutral position but a creedal and political crime that helps falsehood to expand and excludes the truth from the arenas of action. For a tyrant is not born a tyrant; the way is paved for him by silence, and he is raised on the steps of submission, until, when he is empowered, he thinks himself a savior, persists in his misguidance in the name of necessity, and leads the Ummah towards destruction.

Al-Jūlānī, having been granted an authority that has not been granted to other leaders of Jihād in our time, has begun to act not as a banner-bearer but as the "owner of a project." This project has become above revelation, above the text, and above the Ummah. It has been cloaked in the garb of necessity, public interest, and an irresistible political decree. So do not be surprised if you see him obligating the

people to obey him as if it were obedience to Allāh, portraying rebellion against him as rebellion against the religion, criticism of him as a stab at the group, and rejecting his orders as a fitnah that threatens the revolution, the land, and honor.

But the dīn is not surrendered to the politician, revelation is not subjected to public interest, and obedience is not given to one who has suspended Tawḥīd, ruled by the ṭāghūt, and made peace with kufr. If the Ummah reaches this state, the duty of the time, which cannot be postponed, is to restrain this encroaching ruler before he completes his tyranny in the name of the dīn. Fighting is not fitnah if it is directed against one who fights the Sharīʿah, excludes the sincere, rules by other than what Allāh has revealed, and makes himself the shadow of Allāh on earth. Rather, fighting here, if necessary, is from the completion of Jihād, and it is one of the greatest chapters of disavowal from tyranny. It is not to be abandoned to avoid fitnah, but is to be engaged in to repel it and to block the path of an idol being formed in the sanctuary of the dīn. Shaykh al-Islām said: "Whoever's corruption on the earth cannot be repelled except by killing, he is to be killed, such as the one who divides the community of the Muslims and the one who calls to innovations in the dīn."⁶⁹

The duty today is to strip the halo from him, to expose his reality, and to declare without ambiguity: this project is not a project of a khilāfah, but a veiled secular entity, and this leadership is not an extension of the people of Jihād, but a deviation from them, and the one who is silent about this path is contributing to the establishment of a new ṭāghūt, even if he is not content with it in his heart.

We have been commanded to restrain the oppressor, so what of one who uses the dīn itself to oppress? We have been commanded to fight one who prevents us from implementing the Sharīʿah, so what of one who ruled in its name, then stripped it from its foundation, and built a wall for himself with it? This is a gate of Jihād that is opened, not to demolish the state, but to establish the dīn; not to divide the group,

⁶⁹ Majmūʿ al-Fatāwā (vol. 28, p. 109)

but to return it to the principle for which it came out: that Allāh alone be worshipped, His Sharī‘ah be established, and His banner be raised.